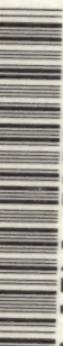


UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



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THE MAN OF SORROWS  
*Chapters on the Sacred Passion*



# The Man of Sorrows

## *Chapters on the Sacred Passion*

by

Robert Eaton

Priest of the Birmingham Oratory

With a Preface

by

Archbishop McIntyre

*Third Impression*

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P R E F A C E

THE HOLY EUCHARIST is a perpetual memorial of our Lord's desire that His sufferings and death for us should ever live in our affectionate remembrance. The Mass is at once a continuation and a commemoration of that supreme sacrifice of love which was consummated for us on Calvary. "And taking bread, He gave thanks, and brake, and gave to them, saying : This is My Body, which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of Me." (St. Luke xxii, 19). Love of the Mass inspires, or ought to inspire, a deeper and more affectionate study of the Passion and death of our Saviour ; and in turn, this deeper and more affectionate study of the Passion and death of our Saviour, intensifies our love and reverence for the Mass.

Devotion to our Lord in His Sacred Passion is a duty laid upon our gratitude ; but it is also a fruitful source of grace and spiritual strength. "And I," said our Divine Lord, during the discourses with which He brought His public ministry to a close, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself. (Now this He said, signifying what death He should die)." (St. John xii, 32, 33). That strong word "draw" tells of the power and efficacy of the Cross. The Cross has a living and effectual power of drawing our heart and spirit. It draws by the grace of which it is the scourge ; it draws by the example, which it holds up to us ; it draws by the love of God's only-begotten Son, which it reveals to us. How powerful is the appeal of the Cross ! "Let us love God, because God first hath loved us." (I. John iv, 19). If we respond to that appeal we shall find in the Cross an inexhaustible treasure.

Through meditation on the sufferings and death of Christ, that fire flames out of which our Lord spoke : "I am come to cast fire on the earth ; and what will I, but that it be kindled ?" (St. Luke xii, 49). Hence it is, that in affective meditation on the Passion the saints have found the secret of strength and inspiration. As "the heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands." (Ps. xviii, 1), so do the lives of the saints "preach Christ crucified. . . Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." (I. Cor. i, 23.) The wisdom of the Cross shines in the

example of the saints ; the power of the Cross is made manifest in their heroic virtues. There has not been a saint, who did not renew, in his own measure, the saying of the Apostle : "I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself for me." (Gal. ii, 20). We, too, may learn, by our own experience, how powerful for good is affectionate meditation on the Sacred Passion.

We can never exhaust the rich suggestiveness of the story of the Passion ; we can never fathom the deep mysteries of the love of the Man of Sorrows. When our meditations have been most profound, it is then that we most vividly realise that our knowledge is only beginning. No wonder that so many books have been written, according to various methods, and from varying points of view, as aids to the study of a subject at once so full and so profitable. That another book should have been written on such a subject requires no apology. Needs, as well as tastes, differ, and must be differently provided for. What appeals to one, may leave another cold and unmoved. Some desire to follow, step by step, the whole story of the Passion, the incident arranged with fulness of detail, in due sequence, and, as events go forward, to have the help of appropriate and suggestive comments. It is for such that Father Robert Eaton has written "The Man of Sorrows." There are about seventy pages of preparatory matter, and then the substance of the book, touching on three hundred pages, is devoted to the story of one day—the Day of the Sacred Passion. This fulness of exposition and suggestion gives scope for the sacred history to impress itself with power on the mind, and to reach the heart with cumulative effect.

There is no time in the year in which the remembrance of our Lord's Passion is inappropriate ; but in the time of Lent, it is peculiarly appropriate. "The Man of Sorrows" is well fitted for Lenten reading. It will touch the heart to repentance, and through repentance awaken the spirit of sacrifice. Where the spirit of sacrifice lives, there love grows stronger, for sacrifice is the nourishment of love.

† JOHN MCINTYRE,  
Archbishop of Birmingham.

# THE MAN OF SORROWS

## CHAPTER I

### INTELLIGENT LOVE

"Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."—(St. John xv, 13).

THESE words may well rank as the most pathetic ever spoken by our Lord. They point to His generous purpose, they emphasise the relation He desires to exist between us, they declare that all that can be done shall be done to assure us of His love for us and of the value He sets upon us. They further assert a measure of love, distinctly thought out and definitely settled, as when a man makes a purchase and says to himself : "I am in need of that, and am ready to give so much for it." The love here expressed was measured in the mind of our Lord before it was framed into the words : "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

The love of God to men is the chief theme of Holy Scripture ; the sacred volume is filled from cover to cover with assurances concerning it. God loves men with an everlasting love, and would draw us to Himself with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love. He that toucheth us, toucheth the very apple of

His eye, for he has graven us in His hands, and even to our old age, to our grey hairs, He will be the same, and will carry us. "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb ? and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee." Thus are we comforted ; thus are we invited to return love by love ; thus are we assured that our service is to be as that of children to a father, a service of love, devoted, constant, generous, thoughtful, without fear, as the pleading cry reaches our ears : "My son, give me thy heart." This is at once our glory, and our stay ; it is also our shame and disquietude ; for our love, we say, is cold, lukewarm, fitful, and reserved—not warm and generous, not stable as is deserved by One who said : "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." How can we account for this ?

Our love is wanting in depth and strength because it is wanting in intelligence. Our love is too emotional ; we love by fits and starts. Our love is not based on reason and understanding. At first we do not connect the two ; yet the brain feeds the heart, and the old scholastic saying is most true : *nihil in affectu quod non prius in intellectu*. Why does a child love its mother so much ? Because it recognises what its mother is, what she has been to it : it differentiates her from all others, and as its eyes gaze upon her, or its thought reverts to her, a whole history of love fills its understanding, and its thought is : "oh, how much I owe her ! what mistakes she saved me from ! what kindnesses she lavished upon me ! how she protected me ! how she gladdened my days, nursed me in sickness, encouraged me in good : what return of love can I make, for no one has ever been, or can ever be, to me what she was ?"—The love of the child is an intelligent love. So, too,

when our Lord came to His last night on earth, and had us present in mind, and spoke the words : "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends," He measured our value in His sacred mind ; He saw us as pearls of great price, well worth the purchase ; He recognised our power of recovery, our eternal destiny, our likeness to God, and He said : "This price I will gladly pay ; to give all that I have is not too much : it is the price of justice, and it shall be paid to the last farthing, for I will not purchase them for less."

Do we remember our Lady's tender question to our Lord when, after three days of crushing sorrow, she found Him in the Temple, apparently quite calm and unconcerned : "Son, why hast thou done so to us ?"—that was her thought—and our Lord gave her a most mysterious answer. Yet the love of that mother remained intense and devoted, for her thought was : "I know I can trust Him : He would tell me more, if I could bear it : it is good for me not to understand all : I will ask no more." So did our Lady's thought guide her acts, and regulate her words, and shape her love ; and she loved our Lord for his very mysteriousness with a love most deep, because it was a love most intelligent.

Again, the first time that St. Mary Magdalen approached our Lord what do we see at work ? It was her mind. St. Luke (vii, 37) directs our attention to this : "when she *knew* that He sat at meat in the Pharisee's house," he says. When she understood something at least of her transgressions, something at least of our Lord's nature and powers, then she began to think, and her thought suggested a course of action, and framed and measured the deed of reparation. Three hundred pence and more will buy right spikenard of greatest value—three

hundred pence and more shall therefore be spent—"she loved much" because she loved with a love that was intelligent. It was not emotion, it was true love ; calm and reasoned, and based on thought.

With these examples to cheer and guide us, let us apply this principle to our dealings with Almighty God. And first, God is to be loved as Creator of all things. The works of His hands betoken His Providence for His children, and are to call forth their praise and gratitude, even as they are to minister to their peace and joy. They are a very theme for love, but what shall draw forth this love ? What shall intensify and enlarge it ? It will be our understanding, which enables us to see God in His works, as the masterpieces of His wisdom and omnipotence ; and what we see and understand will stir us to the depths, and our love will be an intelligent love, the expression of a true allegiance.

But this fair fabric that came from His hands, and on which He gazed with such satisfaction, of which He said it was "very good," has been broken like a potter's vessel. How changed it is ! God sees it as the people of fair villages in France see the homes they loved now ruined beyond repair by the ravages of war. Why not cast it aside as rubbish to the void ? No ; such was not the plan ; God would restore it, for the bruised reed He does not crush, the smoking flax He fans into flame. The work is great, and shall be both slow and gradual ; the work involves pain, yet "God so loved the world," so clung to what He had made, so desired that His power and love should accomplish this work of restoration, that "He gave His only begotten Son for it." "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Thus the Crucifix is God's last word to the world : it is the

be-all and end-all of our lives, the expression of intelligent love, a very abyss of divine love.

But abyss calleth for abyss. How then can we make adequate return ? Only by a love that shows itself in deeds, and that love will never be deep and strong unless it be intelligent. We must study the crucifix, by the aid of prayer and thought; we must make the facts of faith our own concerning "Jesus Christ and Him Crucified." If we really grasp what we assent to, if we understand that He who hung on that Cross was God—God battling with sin, God conquering sin by pain and humiliation, God dying for men, God proclaiming the evil of sin, God atoning for sin, God opening heaven's gates to all—if we grasp this, and never slacken our hold, then our love will grow apace, because it will be the love of intelligence, and our lives will be ordered accordingly. There will be a true and daily return of love by deeds of love ; our hatred of sin will be intensified ; we shall be drawn to the Crucified.

Do we not see this principle at work in our Lord's dealings with our own souls ? He loves us with an intelligent love, for "He calls His own sheep by name." We are units in His sacred mind : He studies each one, and knows our frame to a nicety ; and His love and care for each is thus regulated. So it is that our crosses differ in weight and endurance ; each has what the Good Shepherd sees to be best for each, and all are loved with intelligent love.

Let us carry this principle into another department of charity and service, which is not really another, but very like to the first. We must love our neighbour, and our love for him must be an intelligent love, measured by study and true knowledge. How greatly at variance with this rule do many of us act ! We measure our love by sentiment, by prejudice, by

natural attraction ; we withhold our love and interest without reason, we commit grievous mistakes, and cause untold pain, because we do not know and study the brethren. So we speak wildly, and act foolishly, and pass unfair judgments, and give pain, and withhold friendly intercourse, and show contempt, and refrain from deeds or words of sympathy, for we have no intelligent love, and often act on information that can never be anything but insufficient.

When St. Mary Magdalen went to our Lord, she entered into the same house with Him, "and from the moment she entered, she never ceased to kiss His feet." We have never "entered the true house of our neighbour," we remain outside, and know only the surface, nay, not the whole of that. Were we to enter in and see all, and know all, we should never cease to kiss our neighbour's feet, anointing them with the balm of sympathy, and recognising gladly how much good we found therein, how much that put us to shame. Our love would be an intelligent love, not a "wooden amiability," not "a rule of thumb benevolence," still less the cold calculating, freezing attitude which many adopt so gladly, and cling to so pertinaciously.

In a word, to love our Lord and our neighbour aright, we must pray : and to pray means to think : charity begins in the mind, and finds an issue in the heart, for true love shows itself in deeds—in deeds framed and measured by the intelligence. "For this let us pray that our charity may more and more abound in knowledge and in all understanding." (Phil. i, 9.)

## CHAPTER II

### THE PARABLE OF THE SACRED PASSION

(St. Matthew xxi, 33-46 ; St. Mark xii, 1-12 ; St. Luke xx, 9-19.)

WE must be grateful that at least of the closing days of our Lord's life on earth we have a fairly full account given to us in the Gospels. Of much of His life we know next to nothing ; even of the public life the record is most meagre ; miracles and discourses are grouped together and dismissed in a few words ; so that St. John concludes his Gospel by saying emphatically : "there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written." (St. John xxi, 25.) But of the last seven days we know a good deal, and of no day more than of the Tuesday in Holy Week. The entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the withering of the barren fig-tree with the cleansing of the Temple on the Monday, the great discourses on the end of the world and the destruction of Jerusalem on the Tuesday, accompanied by the refutation of every class of our Lord's enemies, who then put forth their best energies to ensnare Him in His speech and to entrap Him by captious questions. All is drawn on a large scale : our Lord deals with great subjects, and with events that affect the whole

world and its history. He is a conqueror, a teacher that speaks *urbi et orbi*, a prophet and more than a prophet, who sees to the end, and speaks as one having power.

So our Lord said "Hear ye another parable," and He spoke it "to the people," as St. Luke is careful to tell us. It may be regarded as our Lord's final parable, and it forms an historical survey of the Past, the Present, and the Future. It is a summary of God's dealings with men, and a vindication of His ways in their regard. Its imagery is simple, direct and telling, so that our Lord's hearers at once saw its point, and knew directly at whom it was aimed. At once "the chief priests and Pharisees and scribes knew that He spoke this parable of them, and being upon the watch, they sent spies, who should feign themselves just that they might take hold of Him in His words, that they might deliver Him up to the authority and power of the governor." (St. Luke xx, 19-20.)

"There was a man, an householder, who planted a vineyard." Let us notice the dignity and emphasis of that opening sentence. It speaks of a definite design, well thought out, amply executed, from which good results were to be expected. Most markedly indeed did God intervene in the early history of mankind when He "called Abraham" from a distant heathen land, and settled him in Palestine to be "the father of many nations." Yes, in Palestine, the very topography of which speaks of protection, for on one side it is bounded by the sea, on the north by a range of mountains, on the south by the desert. It is altogether a land apart, "a vineyard with a hedge about it," and in that vineyard a press was dug, and a tower was built, and it was let out to husbandmen.

We cannot exaggerate the nearness of Almighty God to His "husbandmen" in the centuries that preceded our Lord's coming into the world. Indeed this formed the boast of Moses in his last addresses to God's chosen people. "Neither is there any other nation," he said, "so great, that hath gods so nigh to them, as our God is present to all our petitions." "For what other nation," so he continued, "is there so renowned that hath ceremonies, and just judgments, and all the law, which I will set forth this day before your eyes?" (Deut. iv, 7, 8.) We who live in the day of the Lord, glory in precisely the same thing; our Lord is so near to us; His name is Emmanuel; we feel the touch of His hand; we hear the sound of His voice; His mother is our mother also; we are His brethren and His friends; He is with us all days to the end. Our privileges are greater and more manifest than were those of the Jews of old, but yet their lights and privileges were great, and they were deeply conscious of God's protecting love and never-failing interest. "The peaceable had a vineyard." "my vineyard is before me," "it was a vineyard on a hill in a fruitful place; and I fenced it in, and picked the stones out of it, and planted it with the choicest vines, and built a tower in the midst thereof, and set up a winepress therein. What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard that I have not done to it?" (Cant. viii, 12; Is. v, 1-4.)

"But I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes," for "as the time of the fruits drew nigh, the householder sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits thereof: and they beat one, and killed another, and stoned another." Wherefore "having yet one son, most dear to him, his only son, he also sent him

unto them, last of all." The Lord of the vineyard has said : "what *shall* I do ?"—a question indicating the height of perplexity. Everything has been done that could be done ; there is no excuse for this sad failure ; it is brought about by ungrateful rebellion, by wilful rejection of light : still there is one thing left to be tried. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken by his Son." (Heb. i, 1, 2.)

"It *may* be—when they *see* him"—as St. Luke pathetically puts it—"when they see him, it may be they will reverence him !" Did our Lord have His Blessed Mother in mind as He spoke those words ? The sight of Him had been Mary's joy for years. "When she saw me," He seems to say—"when she saw Me in her arms, when she saw me after losing Me in the Temple, when she saw Me growing in wisdom and age and grace at Nazareth, she rejoiced in God her Saviour. Will men do the same when they see Me ? will they reverence Me, learn of Me, follow Me, believe in Me, love Me ?" Indeed such a result was in part achieved : "the people were in admiration of His doctrines, the whole world was gone after Him, His enemies prevailed nothing,"—so they said ; but yet at the last "He was cast out of the vineyard and killed !"

"God so loved the world as to give His only begotten son: it may be when the world sees Him, it will reverence Him: but He came unto His own, and His own did not receive Him: He was not for their turn: He was contrary to their doings: He upbraided them with transgressions of the law, and divulged against them the sins of their way of life. So was He grievous unto them, even to behold, for His life was not as other

men's, and his ways were very different. So was He examined by outrages and tortures, and condemned to a most shameful death." (Wisdom ii, 12-20.)

Such is the Parable of the Sacred Passion. Our Lord chose the time and place of its delivery most carefully: it shall be spoken in Jerusalem: it shall be spoken at the end, to a people "stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart: who always resist the Holy Ghost: as their fathers did, so did they also (Acts vii, 51). They honoured God with their lips, but their heart was far from Him: and at the last, they were the betrayers and murderers of the Just One, though they had received the Law by the disposition of Angels." (Acts vii, 52-53.)

But "the stone which the builders rejected, the same shall become the head of the corner. The kingdom of God shall be taken from them, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof." The grain of wheat shall fall into the ground, and die, and so shall bring forth *much* fruit: Christ will become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: but on that account God shall exalt Him, and at the sound of His Name every knee shall bow. "Despoiling the principalities and powers, He hath exposed them confidently in open show, triumphing over them in Himself: horns are in His hands: there is His strength hid: death shall go before His face, and the devil shall go forth before His feet. (Col. ii, 15, and Hab. iii, 4-5.) "He shall lay down His life for sin, and therefore shall see a long-lived seed, and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in His hand." (Is. liii, 10.) Yes, "the stone which the builders rejected, the same shall become the head of the corner. And whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken, but on whosoever it shall fall, it

shall grind him to powder." In these concluding words of power and majesty our Lord embraces the whole world, and divides men into two classes. No one can be indifferent to His coming : neutrality is impossible : we are with Him or against Him : and all are affected, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, since He is set for the fall or for the resurrection of every one.

To some He is "a stone of stumbling and a rock of scandal, to them who stumble at the Word, neither do believe, whereunto also they are set." (1 Pet. ii, 8.) They are scandalised at the Cross of Christ, and swell the cry : "come down from the Cross, and (then) we will believe." These are they on whom the stone falls : they perish utterly : it were better for them if they had not been born : they are ground to powder at the last, and their portion is appointed with the hypocrites, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (St. Matt. xxiv, 51.)

But others regard our Lord as "an elect and precious stone" (1 Pet. ii, 6) ; "a tried stone, (Is. xxviii, 16) ; "they drink of the spiritual rock that follows them, and the rock is Christ" (1 Cor. x, 4), and on that Stone they "fall," and are "bruised," and are "broken." Contact with our Lord bruises human nature : we are bruised by His poverty, by His purity, by His love of humility, but by our bruises and stripes we are healed, for we grow to the likeness of Christ. We become as metal hammered out, until we are as crucifixes of gold, our arms extended with love for God and souls, our feet clasped and fixed in obedience, our head crowned with the thorns of humility—a lowly esteem of self, nailed to the Cross with Christ, so that "we live, now not we, but Christ liveth in us." (Gal. ii, 20.) These are they who fall on the stone.

Such is our Lord's farewell to the world, and it is as Jesus Christ crucified that He thus divided men into two camps. It is as the Man of Sorrows that He thus places before us life and death, and bids us choose which we will. "I am the vine and you are the branches"—so He concludes to those who accept this "hard saying," and still are ready to walk with Him. "He has taken my soul as a wild vine, and set it in the richest soil and sunniest corner of His vineyard, and watered it with the dews of actual graces from above, and from below with the streams of living water beside which it is planted. He has digged round the roots by sorrow and humiliation, designed to soften and loosen the affections: He has trained and pruned the branches over the walls of His house." He comes to seek fruit from it, as surely He has every right to do ; what grapes are growing ? sweet or sour ? Must the Lord of the vineyard say : "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground ?"

## CHAPTER III

### OUR LORD'S ESTIMATE OF HIS WORK ON THE EVE OF HIS PASSION

"Whereas He had done many miracles before them, they believed not in Him."—(St. John xii, 37.)

ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL is supplementary to the other three, giving us incidents which are wanting in the Synoptists, and furnishing us with invaluable notes of time and explanatory remarks which help us to fit the whole story together in a perfect sequence. And it is especially with regard to our Lord's connection with the Holy City that St. John's narrative is so full and precious, telling us of His various visits to Jerusalem at the Festival-times during His Galilæan ministry, showing us how repeatedly He then took the place by storm, confronting His enemies openly, refuting them, and establishing His claims, and giving us special light and fullness of detail with regard to the closing days of His earthly life. Our Lord had left Galilee for good about four months before His sacred Passion, and this time was spent in journeying southwards through Peraea, on the east of the Jordan, in the neighbourhood of Jericho, and also in Jerusalem, and its neighbourhood. There was ceaseless preaching, and evangelisation of Judaea and the south

during those weeks, and in the course of them our Lord worked two of His most striking miracles. This it is very much to the purpose to bear in mind. For well nigh three years our Lord had been before the world ; "the whole world had gone after Him" ; "He had always spoken openly to the world and in secret had spoken nothing." His miracles could not be counted, and they were great indeed, over the powers of nature, over diseases and infirmities, over the might of death itself. People from Jerusalem had journeyed to the north to see Him and to confront Him ; a great Prophet had arisen ; God had visited His people ; day by day men said to themselves : "we never saw the like," "we have seen wonderful things to-day." And now our Lord has entered into the very centre of the arena, and in the Holy City itself He has opened the eyes of a man born blind. "From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind ; unless this man were of God, he could not do anything,"—such was the righteous conclusion from that event, which moved the whole city. (St. John ix.) But even greater testimony should yet be given. Hard by to Jerusalem there lay a young man dead, whose name was Lazarus. He was well known, as were also his two sisters. He was not only dead, but had been four days in the tomb. But the voice of our Lord called him back to life. "Lazarus, come forth," He said, "and at once, he that had been dead, came forth, bound feet and hands with winding bands, and his face was bound about with a napkin." "Loose him, and let him go," added our Lord, and soon we find him sitting as a guest at table with our Lord. Many believed, but many were hardened by the wonder, and "from that day they devised to put our Lord to

death," nay, in their madness, "the chief priests thought to kill Lazarus also." (St. John xi.)

Such is the background of the story of our Lord's last days on earth. The picture is filled in by the very real triumph of Palm Sunday, and as we read its story, we ask : why was the welcome of the palms so short-lived ? why was the cry Hosanna so soon changed to that of Crucify Him ? How is it possible that men did not then believe, and with St. Thomas throw themselves at the feet of our Lord, saying : "My Lord and my God ?" Why was such a work of love and power, continued so long, and carried out in such a spirit, to be crowned with failure ?

St. John gives us our Lord's own reply to this question, and His summary of His work. "Whereas He had done so many miracles before them (yes, before them, not in secret) they believed not in Him." Our Lord's last words "before the festival day" are these : "Yet a little while, the light is among you. Walk whilst you have the light, that the darkness overtake you not. He that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. Whilst you have the light, believe in the light, that you may be children of light." The light has shone in darkness, and the path is abundantly clear ; profit by it ; direct your feet into the way of peace ; rejoice to follow the lead so clearly given, for at any moment the light may be withdrawn, and a darkness thick, impenetrable, and depressing, will ensue. "Whilst you have the light, believe in the light, that you may be children of the light."

These words are so arresting because of their position at the very end. The Public Life is over ; there will be no more teaching, no more miracles. Our Lord's work is done, and in the Holy City itself He thus addresses a last appeal to those who have

ears to hear, declaring that He has shed “the great light” needed, but that its rays pass away, and a darkness most terrible ensues.

“These things Jesus spoke—and He went away—and hid Himself from them.” (St. John xii, 36.)

St. John now illustrates this theme by words from Isaias, fulfilled to the letter by the Jews in our Lord’s day, fulfilled to the letter by many to-day. “Lord, who hath believed our hearing? To whom hath the power of the Lord been revealed? He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.” Miracles are no remedy for unbelief. If men will not listen to Moses and the Prophets, yea and to One greater than they, neither will they believe if one rise from the dead. Indifference and love of self keep them where they are, and as they are. They have no time, no inclination, to follow the light, and it passes away, and darkness ensues.

Yet another cause is now named in this great passage: “Many of the chief men did believe in Him,” says St. John, “but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, that they might not be cast out of the synagogue, for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.” The smile of Cæsar, the cringing to the suggestions of others, the want of moral courage to obey conscience, motives of human respect, keep men from faith and obedience, and finally extinguish the light vouchsafed to them.

Such is our Lord’s summary of His work on earth, and it seems to come with a note of failure from His Sacred Heart. “What more can I do for my vineyard?” To this train of thought He gave full vent in His agony in the Garden. It was present throughout the Passion. It was with Him

to the end in the darkness of the eclipse. Whereas He had done so many miracles before them, they believed not in Him." Let each one gather his own fruit. Is either of the two forces named by St. John operating in us? Is there within us what St. Paul calls "an evil heart of unbelief to depart from the living God?" (Hebrew iii, 12.) Or is there that weak spirit that makes us "love the glory of men rather than the glory of God?"

Our Lord's estimate of His work on earth for the souls of men spelt failure, yet, "having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end," and "bearing His own Cross" went forth to die upon it. Wherefore if in our work for our Lord, for souls, for those at home, we meet with no fruit, no appreciation, no success; if failure seem our portion, and discouragement our daily bread, let us not repine, or lose heart and hope, but, like our Lord, having loved our own who were in the world, love them to the end, holding fast to the cross, for there is a reward to our labours, and a day will come when "God will wipe away all tears from our eyes."

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SUPPER AT BETHANY

IT was on the Saturday before the first Palm Sunday, the eve of the first Holy Week, as St. John expressly tells us, that our Lord found Himself at Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, the centre of a circle of friends. (St. John xii, 1.) It is fitting that a day of peace and rest should precede the labours and pains that were so near at hand. Lazarus, lately raised from the dead, was among them that sat at table, and Martha, too, was there, busy with much serving ; and Jesus and His disciples were the guests. While they are at meat, quietly and unobtrusively Mary Magdalen enters, with “a pound of ointment, of genuine spikenard, of great price, in an alabaster box —and breaking the alabaster box she poured it upon His head, and wiped His feet with her hair ; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.” The scene is described for us in Scripture with a fullness of detail, and a wealth of language, for there was so much gathered there. Mary Magdalen’s past history, which was all forgiven, was mingled in that ointment; the gratitude and peace of a contrite heart formed part of its ingredients, and the present state of that soul, with its purity and self-sacrifice, gave to the ointment its sweet and penetrating perfume. Had

she at all heard of the predictions of the Sacred Passion which so frequently had fallen from the lips of her Lord ? It is more than likely, for sad news travels fast. She could not be blind to the increasing anger of the Jews against our Lord, so that they were seeking to slay even her brother Lazarus, for no other cause than that he had lately afforded by his death an opportunity for our Lord to exercise His divine power over life and death. (St. John xii, 10.) And if they would slay Lazarus, how much more keen would they be to slay our Lord ; so she might well suppose. Love is always discerning and far-seeing, if it be true : and because it is so discerning, it is also generous and inventive. "It may be my last chance," so she would think : "I will do what I can," such is her spirit and resolve. True love brooks no delays ; it never counts the cost; it comes beforehand; it would fain become absorbed into the object loved, that even in death it may not be divided. "He has done so much for me ; what return can I make ? I can do but little, but what I can, that I will do : no expense must be spared : He must have of my best." So "when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, and was at meat, there came to Him a woman (St. John alone gives her name) having an alabaster box of precious ointment, and poured it on His head as He was at table : and she anointed His feet, and wiped His feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Now there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made ? And one of the disciples, Judas Iscariot, he that was about to betray Him, said : Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor ? And they murmured against her."

What an outrage that such a deed of love and

reparation should be objected to ! What a sacrilege that such a scene of peace should be disturbed ! Yet, so it was. St. John expressly tells us that it was Judas who led the ill-mannered protest, and communicated his murmuring spirit to others around. "They had indignation within themselves"—thus indirectly telling us of the magnificence of Mary Magdalen's gift. It is a waste, they say : more than three hundred pence has gone—and for what good ? Think of the starving, naked poor that might have been fed and clothed and cheered with that outlay ! So at all times speaks the world, with its self-righteousness and insolent self-assertion, over every deed of good done to our Lord and His Church.

But this deed was defended and praised by our Lord, as was no other in the Gospel story. "Why do you trouble this woman," He said : "let her alone : she has wrought a good work upon Me : she hath done what she could : she is come beforehand to anoint My body for the burial. Amen, amen I say to you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also what she hath done, shall be told for a memorial of her."

Surely, Judas, our Lord might have added, the word "waste" is an unjust word for you to use ? Look back on the three years you have known Me : have I wasted much ? have I ministered to My own needs ? If waste there has been, on whom has it been poured ? There may have been waste of power, of love, of grace, but where is the greatest waste of all ? It has been in your own case. There has been vast expenditure on you, untold patience, innumerable acts of kindness and sympathy, much encouragement, gentle warnings ; I gave you a position of trust and great powers ; blessed are the eyes which have seen the things that you have seen ; blessed are the ears

which have heard the things that you have heard : but this has been waste, and the home in which we are gathered is filled with the odour of Mary's love, but not with the love of your hardened heart—"Oh, Judas," "what have I done to thee, or in what have I molested thee ? Answer me."

We see here in the case of Judas, the blinding and hardening effect of wilful sin long indulged in. All nice instincts and feelings seem to have been deadened within him. Where there ought to have been love, there was simply loathing ; where there ought to have been admiration, there was contempt. Judas could see no beauty in our Lord ; nothing our Lord could say was right, nothing He did was worthy of anything but censure ; and now this expenditure of money hit him in his tenderest point, and made him behave as we have seen.

What did Judas do at the banquet at Bethany ? He deliberately spoilt the happiness and peace of others. Have we ever done the same ; is our present bearing to another such that, if we heard him praised, we would at once say something to cause him to be blamed or despised ? If we heard of his success, would we underrate or deny it, or explain it away ? if a scheme for his welfare or happiness were being promoted, would we seek to spoil it ? if we heard he had failed, would we rejoice ? Such was the bearing of Judas to our Lord at the Supper at Bethany : is it ours to any of our neighbours now ? Again, Judas at the Supper at Bethany was guilty of throwing religion in the face of our Lord. "Why this waste ?" he was bold enough to say, as though he said : "You profess to love poverty and to have a care for the poor : your very first sentence as a teacher was 'blessed are the poor' : why don't you practise what you preach ? why do you allow this

gross extravagance? nay, you profit by it yourself." Do we ever do this? It is by no means uncommon. Have we ever done it in word? nay, have we ever done it in thought?

Our Lord bore the pain and outrage in silence, and we must do the same if such things be said, but the temptation will be strong to brood over such taunts and to allow them to take deep root in our mind. The spirit of charity alone can help us to get good from such a trial, and so walk in the steps of Him who bids us "pray for those that persecute or caluminate us, that we be the children of our Father who is in heaven, who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and unjust."

Let us now note the tender bearing of our Lord to Mary Magdalen. How He seems in this scene to emphasise the craving of His sacred Heart for our personal love and devotion to Him, bidding us regard Him as a friend, ever ready to take our side and defend us, ever ready to receive a return of love from us. How He seems to remember all that He has been to us, how He wishes us to bear in mind our past relations with Him, making them a basis for gratitude and for reparation. "She hath done what she could,"—this it is that our Lord seems so specially and warmly to commend: thus teaching those who in their pride would often do more than they can, and spoil their work by an over-boisterous strain and ill-measured zeal; thus also encouraging all to do each one his best for our Lord, by the perfect, loving performance of daily duties, embracing our work in life, and therein doing what we can for the name of Jesus. So shall we offer to Him an ointment of great value, genuine and true, the fragrance of which shall fill the whole house of our eternity.

So far as we know, our Lord only accepted four

gifts during His life on earth. They were the gold, the incense, and the myrrh of the Magi, and the right spikenard of Mary Magdalen, to whom many sins had been forgiven. Let us note that all four gifts are the best of their kind, and there is neither show nor imitation about any of them. Yet, there is one other gift for which our Lord had a special blessing, and for which He asked twice when on earth, but which never was given to Him. He asked for it when He sat weary with His journey by Jacob's well : He asked for it when he said "I thirst" at the last hour on Calvary. The gift was a cup of cold water, which shall not lose its reward.

If the richness of Mary Magdalen's offering be beyond our powers, let us at least offer to our Lord the refreshment of the simplest gift that can be named : we may begin with that ; and we shall advance by steps to higher things. Let us seek to offer to Him a service that shall be clear as fresh spring-water in its sincerity, fresh as clean water in its innocence, refreshing as cool water in summer's heat because it is our best, and we may hope to share the blessing and commendation of our Lord to Mary Magdalen : "She hath done what she could."

## CHAPTER V

### THE JUDAEOAN MINISTRY OF OUR LORD

"And it came to pass, as He was going to Jerusalem, Jesus passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee."—(St. Luke xvii, 11.)

THESE words give us a valuable indication of our Lord's movements during the last six months of His earthly life. It is a period that is not commonly understood and appreciated. If we confine our reading to St. Matthew and St. Mark, we should come to the conclusion that, after our Lord had worked for two and a half years in Galilee, He went to Jerusalem, and there suffered and died, and that was the end of things. This would imply that all Judaea was left practically alone, but this is far from being the case.

It was in Jerusalem itself that our Lord began His public work ; He there cleansed the Temple for the first time of the buyers and sellers, and generally proclaimed Himself the Messiah. (St. John, ii.) Opposition was at once aroused, and our Lord went north to Galilee, and there made Capharnaum His home and headquarters, so that it came to be called "His own city." (St. Matthew ix, 1.) He evangelised its every town and village, and went up to Jerusalem only at the greater Feasts. For all that long period St. Matthew and St. Mark are our main authorities, and they never mention anything that our Lord did

or said in Jerusalem, except the account of His sacred Passion.

So things went on for two years and a half. If the Pharisees and Scribes wanted to see our Lord, to oppose and insult Him, as they did, they had to journey from Jerusalem, and this they did more than once ; but our Lord's work in their midst had not as yet begun. Galilee is first evangelised by the labours of our Lord, and of the Twelve, and this period culminated in the Transfiguration on Mount Hermon in the far north, in the confession of St. Peter in our Lord's Divinity, and in the bestowal upon him of the Primacy and the power of the keys.

From that moment our Lord's work lay in the south : "His face is set as of one going to Jerusalem"; the sacred Passion has been foretold ; the preaching of the Cross has begun ; the Church is completely formed ; and now our Lord goes into Judaea, into the very stronghold of the enemy. For this period of some four months duration, St. Luke is our main source of information, and he is supplemented by St. John, while St. Matthew and St. Mark do not help us at all.

So our Lord journeyed down the East bank of the Jordan, through a district called Peraea, and entered Judaea by way of Jericho, having passed through the same country where St. John the Baptist had baptized and preached, and where He Himself had deigned to be baptized at the opening of His public life.

Now there began a period of most strenuous labour. The whole of the sacred narrative is now eminently Judaeen. The parable of the good Samaritan, for example, was certainly given in the South. "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho"—our Lord would never have used those words in Galilee. Again, the parable of the Pharisee and the

Publican—"two men went up into the Temple to pray"—clearly this was spoken in Jerusalem, nay, probably in the Temple itself. The two similes—"I am the good Shepherd," and "I am the door" were in all likelihood suggested by the sheep being driven into the Temple for sacrifice. Indeed Judaea is now our Lord's field, and St. John tells us that our Lord was in Jerusalem for the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple—"and it was winter" (x. 22)—The Feast was much prized, but was small in comparison with the Passover, and one of more recent institution. Our Lord had never gone up to Jerusalem for this Feast during His ministry in Galilee—it was not incumbent on Him to do so—but now His work was in Judaea, and so He was more easily able to be present. And this point is confirmed and corroborated by the testimony of St. Peter himself in the Act of the Apostles (x, 37), in his address to Cornelius the centurion, where he says: "You know the word which hath been published through all Judaea," and "we are witnesses of all things which He did in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem." This is strong testimony to the fact of our Lord's ministry in Judaea and also to its duration and extent.

Before "He had finished the work His Father had given Him to do," He must "come unto His own," and be "despised and rejected by them." For two years and more they have heard much of His doings, they have opposed Him at a distance, they have seen Him at intervals in their midst. Two of His most striking miracles (the one on the man at the Probiatic Pool, and the one on the man born blind) had been worked before their eyes, and now He is to stay with them awhile. Judaea was essentially the land of the Jews ; there stood Jerusalem and its Temple ; there were stored the traditions

of ages; there were to be found the hope of the Messias and the preparation for the Gospel of peace ; and there now was our Lord, a Prophet, yea, and more than a Prophet, one mightier than St. John the Baptist, full of grace and truth, saying of them especially “the harvest here is great, but the labourers are few.”

“The labourers are too few”—and so “the Lord appointed also other seventy-two : and He sent them two and two before his face, into every city and place, whither He Himself was to come” (St. Luke x). Galilee had been evangelised in six different directions at once by the labours of the Twelve : but Judaea and Peraea are to be evangelised in thirty-six directions at once. What a picture we have here of our Lord, and His zeal for souls ! The Church is at work before its time; there is activity, there is organisation, and our Lord directs the whole ; as the first Pope, He sends His missioners whither He would.

We look in vain now for any one city where He chiefly abides; His teaching, though a development of the Galilaean, is more didactic, more severe, yet full of mercy and love for sinners, as shown in the parable of the Prodigal son, which belongs to this period. Naturally all this produced its effect ; an increase of popularity on the one hand, an increase of opposition on the other, and this we see in the stormy, heated interviews between our Lord and the Jews, as recorded mainly by St. John. The death of our Lord was desired and planned : nothing else could relieve the strain ; and our Lord at last openly said to them—“Why seek you to kill me ?” And they dared to answer in their rage : “Thou hast a devil : who seeketh to kill thee ?” (St. John vii, 20).

At length our Lord precipitated a crisis by the greatest of His miracles. At the very gates of Jerusalem He raised Lazarus from the dead, after

he had been four days in the grave. St. John alone records this miracle, and his account of it is most full. Naturally it caused a profound sensation : many crowded from Jerusalem to see the man who had been dead and buried, and now was living and sitting at table with the Master who had called him forth from the grave. Something must be done to check this onward progress : "What do we?" said the enemies of our Lord one to the other, "for this man doth many miracles" (St. John xi, 47).

A few days pass by, and the Judaean ministry is closed when the great crowd escorted our Lord into Jerusalem amid the waving of palm branches and the glad cries of Hosanna ; but His tears, as He gazes at Jerusalem in its loveliness, are prophetic of the truth. The ministry has been glorious and energetic indeed, light has been shed, seed has been sown, truths have been established, claims have been proved, but "He has come unto His own, and His own will not receive Him"—such is the bitter fruit of the toil.

In a few hours Pilate has made friends with Herod against Him ; the Pharisees have made friends with Sadducees and Herodians against Him, for the world is never unanimous except in opposition to our Lord ; the fickle multitude have changed their cry ; they are blind and hardened ; light is rejected, gifts are discarded, kindnesses are forgotten or met with ingratitude, and a ready instrument to bring about the Master's fall is found in the treachery of one of His own. Yes, so must the grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, or else it remaineth alone ; but if it fall into the ground and die, it bringeth forth much fruit. So did the Lord, mighty in battle, carry the war into the enemy's camp, and there condescend in order to conquer.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PHARISEES SEEK TO SCARE OUR LORD FROM GALILEE

EVERY word and incident in the life of our Lord is of great importance and interest, yet some receive more notice than others. Indeed some of them seem to be almost ignored, and this is true of the incident in the life of our Lord to which we now turn our attention. Recorded only by St. Luke (xiii, 31-35), it occurred in the closing weeks of our Lord's earthly life. Our Lord spent about four months in accomplishing His last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, and for that period of intense activity St. Luke is our only authority. Never before in the Public Life of our Lord was the Gospel so widely preached ; "the whole world went after our Lord," and of course this roused the indignation and envy of the Pharisees. Hypocrites they ever were, dogging our Lord's steps, misinterpreting His deeds and words, and seeking to destroy Him ; and now they had recourse to a stratagem most cunningly devised, clothed in language most deceitful—a stratagem the full issue of which can only be conjectured. "There came some of the Pharisees saying to Him" : "Depart, and get thee hence, for Herod hath a mind to kill thee" ; so they spoke. We may notice the urgency of the words : "depart and get thee hence"

the same idea being expressed by a double phrase. But the reason given for our Lord's departure shows how false their words were from first to last : "Herod hath a mind to kill thee !" No, indeed Herod had no such mind ! He was a vain, frivolous, voluptuous man, but his hands were already red with the blood of St. John the Baptist, and he had no intention of making them yet more incarnadined with that of our Lord. Herod "wished for a long time" to see Him work a few miracles, but he wanted neither blood-shed nor words. Of words he had had enough and to spare from the lips of St. John, and if Herod had really desired our Lord's death, the Pharisees would have been the last to have warned Him to flee from the danger-zone, for His death was precisely what they themselves so earnestly desired. Indeed every word they spoke was false, and our Lord knew it ; and He showed them that He knew it by the words of His reply. "Go tell that fox !" It is the only word of utter contempt that we know to have fallen from our Lord's lips. If Herod desired His death, as the Pharisees asserted, our Lord would never have called him a fox : rather He would have said : "Go, tell that wolf," or "Go tell that leopard." So our Lord made reply : "Go tell that fox : Behold I cast out devils, and do cures to-day and to-morrow and the third day I am consummated."

Indeed the Lion of the tribe of Juda is not to be scared by a fox from Galilee ! It is as though our Lord had said : "Go and tell King Herod that I am here, and busy in My work : he can find Me here, if he wishes to meet Me : I shall not change My plans for him : there are evil spirits at hand who need My attention ; there are sick people, too, who need My care ; when I have done all I intend to do, I shall

close My labours as and when I please, for I have power to lay down My life, I have power also to take it up again : such is My message to that fox, whom you falsely declare sent you to Me."

But the Pharisees, too, are to have their lesson. In the presence of our Lord they stand, stung to the quick by the unveiling of their deceit, pulverised by the majesty of His clear reply, and to them He now addresses Himself, in that "spirit of finest irony which is not alien from the spirit of deepest love and loftiest truth." "Nevertheless," He adds, "I must walk to-day and to-morrow, and the day following, because it cannot be that a Prophet perish out of Jerusalem." It is as though He said : "You desire and advise Me to move out of these parts, and I will do so ; nay, I must do so, for 'the things concerning Me have an end,' and now I am near to that end. But I cannot die here ; a greater than Jonas, a greater than Solomon is now speaking to you ; all the prophets have been slain by you in Jerusalem, as you know well, and there, too, I must be slain, for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. Upon you must come all the just blood that hath been shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the just, even unto the blood of Zacharias, the son of Barachias, whom you killed between the temple and the altar. Very soon you will cry ; His blood also be upon us and upon our children, and that must be in Jerusalem : and so to Jerusalem I go."

Our Lord then closed the scene with a lament over the Holy City : "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killst the prophets, and stonest them that are sent to thee, how often would I have gathered thy children as the bird doth her brood under her wings, and thou wouldest not ! Behold, your house shall be left to you desolate. And I say to you, that you shall not

see Me till the time come when you shall say : 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' "

Never assuredly did our Lord put His enemies to shame more completely than on this occasion, and they could not offer one word in explanation or reply. He is the Master ; He has a work to do, and He knows its every detail, and its dimensions, and never till it is consummated will He abandon it. The sacred Passion was before His mind as He spoke that phrase, "I am consummated." His mind went forward to the last hour on Calvary when, from the Cross, He declared, with the same massive word, that what He now prophesied was fulfilled.

It is a scene that helps us to love our Lord, and we may learn much from it. From the Pharisees let us learn the work of envy in the souls of men, its power, its positive fury, the sharpness of its tooth, the depth of its bite. "Envy is the rottenness of the bones," and "by it death came into the world." We envy another's good, or popularity, or success, with a desire to spoil it, or to mar its beauty and completeness. Rather "let us walk honestly as in the day, not in contention and envy," but "with a charity that enviieth not." And from our Lord let us learn how a good conscience is the true shield against all opposition, our chief comfort in hours of gloom. Men may say and do what they please : if we are trying "to do the will of Him that sent us," we need fear none of Herod's threats, nor be moved by the envy of Pharisees about us. Let us but persevere with our task until it be consummated—casting out the devils of our passions, "doing the cures" of our weaknesses, walking the while to the Jerusalem which is above, which is free, which is our mother. So will we "expect the Lord, do manfully, and let our heart take courage."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FIRST PALM SUNDAY

AMID the many events that went to make up the external life of our Lord on earth there are two, and only two, that are at all clothed with success or splendour—the Transfiguration on Mount Hermon and His entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. All else is stamped with simplicity and lowness, often indeed with failure and pain, but these two tell us what might have been had our Lord desired His Kingdom to be of this world, and they stand out quite apart from the rest of the picture.

Our Lord had been travelling from the north of Palestine accompanied by pilgrims from Galilee, on their way to Jerusalem for the Passover. As He went He had worked many miracles, and the enthusiasm of His followers had grown strong. While these pushed on to Jerusalem, "lifting their eyes to the mountains whence help should come to them," our Lord turned aside and tarried awhile in Bethany at the house of Martha and Mary. On their arrival in the Holy City the pilgrims would speak of Him, of "what things had been done on the way," and thus help to increase the already great interest in all that concerned Him. "The whole world was going after Him," His enemies declared, and "will He come for

the festival day ?" was the question in the mouths of all.

As we read the sacred narrative, we feel that never before in the three years, now so soon to close, had our Lord been so absolutely the unique topic of thought and conversation throughout the land, and especially of course in Jerusalem. The Apostles no doubt felt that now was the time for the much spoken of Kingdom to begin, and they watched every movement of their Master eagerly. And now Palm Sunday has dawned, and our Lord says to the Twelve : "behold we go up to Jerusalem," and tells Peter and John to go over to Bethphage, a little village hard by, adding that at once they will find an ass tied, and a colt with her, on which no one ever yet has sat. "Loose them and bring them to Me." Should anyone object to their being taken thus by strangers, they are simply to say : "The Lord has need of them," and "forthwith he will let them go." "And going their way, they found the colt tied before the gate without, in the meeting of two ways, and they loose him. And some of them that stood there, said to them : "What do you loosing the colt ?" Who said to them as Jesus had commanded them, and they let him go with them."

Probably Lazarus was close to our Lord, and walked beside Him with the other disciples, and they helped our Lord to mount the colt. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Jerusalem : behold, thy King cometh to thee, the Just and Saviour : He is poor and riding upon an ass, and a colt the foal of her that is used to the yoke." The sons of the Judges of Israel in ancient days, rode on white asses ; King David rode on a mule ; but Absalom, in his rebellion, "made himself chariots and horsemen and fifty men to run before him" (2 Kings xv, 1) ; while Solomon

brought thousands of horses from Egypt (3 Kings x, 25). The horse was the symbol of worldly power and pomp, the symbol, too, of war; hence the ass fell into discredit as the new heathen ideal of royal splendour was increasingly accepted, so that in the last days of the Jewish monarchy the burial of an ass was a proverb for an end of disgrace (Jerem. xxii, 19). No king of Juda or of Israel had ever ridden on an ass ; their kingdoms were of this world ; but a King now treads the earth whose kingdom is not of this world, and He is poor, and He is the Prince of Peace—wherefore “tell the daughter of Sion, thy king now comes to thee riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass,” which is a symbol of peace.

Let us note in passing how this incident gives us an illustration of the exacting nature of our Lord’s claims. It was not from a rich man that our Lord asked for the loan of the ass, but from a poor one ; nothing was said of any pay for the use of the animals, not a word was said about their return, the two disciples were merely to say, somewhat curtly, if the least objection were raised : “The Lord has need of them.” These are the ways of God. He takes and He leaves. The “why” and the “wherefore” are not given—“My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are my ways exalted above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts” (Is. lv, 8, 9). His demands are great, and strange, and often sudden. A friend is taken away by death, a trial that changes our lives enters our door, and comes to stay, and if any man says anything, say ye : “the Lord hath need of them,” for He is the owner of all ; our goods, our friends, our time are only lent to us, and we are but stewards.

Our Lord has made no secret of His demands. He is a jealous Lord. "Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it : and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel, shall save it" (St. Mark viii, 35). "Amen I say to you, there is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive much more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting" (St. Luke xviii, 29, 30). Who ever heard of such demands ? What human leader or teacher dare make them ? Yet, they are made, and they are complied with to the letter, and without a murmur or a question, though not without a sacrifice—"The Lord hath need of such gifts," is to be enough for us, and the Sacred Passion, with its ready sacrifice, is our Lord's protection to Himself, (if we may dare so to speak) for what He asks of us, His friends :

Love, so amazing, so divine  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Yet another feature of our Lord's work in the world of men is here revealed. He has, of course, no need of anyone : God has no need of men : but He deigns to use them as His instruments, and it is thus true to say : "the Lord hath need of them." It is a bold phrase, but in so far as we get it from our Lord's own lips, let us use it for our encouragement—"He looks for one to comfort Him" ; "watch with me," "gather with me," He says. Men rely on wealth, and brains, and brute force, and strong influence for the success of their designs ; God chooses the little things and the weak things of this world to confound the strong. When our Lord came to help us, there were many rich men in the world,

many men of marked ability and intelligence, and He could have commanded them by a word. But no : He chose twelve poor men, not too richly endowed with brains and education, and of those twelve men "the Lord had need." At Cana He would provide wine for the feast ; He did not do so by His only word, as He might have done ; there was water there, and the water He would use, and of that water "the Lord had need." Five thousand starving men are around Him, and He would feed them ; He does not rain down bread from heaven, as He might have done ; five small loaves are there and a few little fishes, and these He will use: and of those few loaves and fishes "the Lord had need." The same principle holds good in the Sacraments : a little water, a little bread and wine, a little oil and balsam—these typify what He would spiritually effect in our souls. Graces could be bestowed in other ways, but these simple materials He will use, and of these materials "the Lord has need." Nay, of us all "the Lord has need," though we be dull as the ass, restless and undisciplined as the foal—"Of what use am I ; who wants me ; who values my works and efforts ?" Say not so ; it is discouraging ; it is moreover untrue. The Lord has need of our daily task, of our simple, dutiful efforts ; the more ordinary they are, the more hidden, the more deeply stamped with obedience, the more distasteful to us, the more He has need of them, the greater their beauty and value in His sight. Daily He looks for "fruit" ; what can we give Him ? Something rich, something noble and heroic ? No, these are not to hand, and the Lord has no need of any such things ; it is the simple lowly task that His eye looks for, that His hand will gladly hold, that His heart will rejoice over.

But to proceed. The report of the approach of

our Lord quickly reached Jerusalem, and a large number went out to meet Him, and thus He became the central figure of the procession, hemmed in between the two companies. Among the multitude are many who were with our Lord when he called Lazarus out of the grave, and they had brought many others with them, as St. John expressly says (xii, 19). The events of thirty years come to mind now—the miracles, the discourses, the healing of the sick, the comfort given to mourners, the beauty of a life spent in going about doing good—all these rush, as in a stream, into the minds of those present, and fill them with enthusiasm. They cannot restrain themselves ; “He has done all things well ; He has made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak,” they say ; they would have something in their hands to wave, expressive of their feelings, and so they cut down palms from the trees. The king’s highway must be rich and strewn with tapestry ; their cloaks are the best approach to this, and quickly they are taken from their shoulders and spread on the ground. Every movement of their bodies shows their respect, and as they reach the descent of Mount Olivet, the whole multitude of the disciples began with joy to praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, saying : “Hosanna to the son of David : blessed be the king who cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven, and glory on high.”

The road by which our Lord was advancing climbs over the crest of the Mount of Olives, and soon they were at its summit. At that point Jerusalem, in all the loveliness of its structure and situation, bursts full on the view. It was one of the wonders of the Oriental world, girdled with towers and battlements, crowned with palaces, above all adorned with its Temple of white marble and golden roofs, the

central point of the believing world, the Temple where the true God was adored and praised, and which but lately had been completed. "It lay before our Lord, with all its towers and pinnacles, its golden roof and marble porticoes hiding all the sin and ingratitudo that had been, and the far greater sin that was to be accomplished in so short a number of days, in the blaze of its splendour, as if angels had built its walls, and none but saints had thronged its courts." Our Lord gazed upon it, and while He understood its beauty, He understood also its awful doom. So, "when He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying : if thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace——" He could add no more : He sobbed aloud, and His utterance broke off, choked with tears. At length He said : "They are now hidden from thine eyes : and days shall come upon thee, when thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straighten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee : and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation." With how much reason did our Lord weep over Jerusalem, seeing she was not what she might and ought to have been ! What a centre she should have given Him for His work ! What a successful inauguration she could have afforded to the preaching of the Gospel ! There was the Temple ready for the Holy Mass and the Divine Office ! there were countless priests ready for ordination, learned in Scripture, and eloquent of speech ! Jerusalem was the centre of the world, to which men and women flocked from all parts. The Jews dispersed in Alexandria and Asia Minor and Greece and Italy would hear of the welcome our

Lord had there received, and how He had made the Holy City His headquarters, and all would soon have become Christians ; but the pastures that were ready and long-prepared for the sheep will not welcome the Shepherd, and His work must begin elsewhere, "with the nations afar off," and be carried out with labour and difficulty, with no good start to help it on.

So did our Lord enter Jerusalem, and "the whole city was moved, saying : Who is this ? And the people said, This is Jesus the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee." And there came to Him the blind, and the lame in the Temple, and He healed them. And the chief priests and scribes seeing the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying "Hosanna to the Son of David" were moved with indignation, and said to Him, "Hearest Thou what these say ?" And Jesus said to them : "Yea, have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of infants and of sucklings Thou hast perfected praise ? And if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out.' " Thus the day came to an end, and having viewed all things round about, when the eventide was come, He went out to Bethania with the Twelve.

So did "the Lord whom we seek, and the Angel of the Testament whom we desire, come to His temple"; "a solemn day was appointed," but it proved a day "with shady boughs" (Ps. cxvii), for again He had come unto His own, and His own had not welcomed Him, though His eyes were more beautiful than wine, and His teeth whiter than milk. They were a nation without counsel and without wisdom. And the Lord said : "I will hide my face from them, and will consider what their last end shall be ; for it is a perverse generation and unfaithful children" (Deut. xxxii). "My sorrow is above sorrow, My heart

mourneth within Me. The kite in the air hath known her time, the turtle, and the swallow, and the stork have observed the time of their coming : but My people have not known the judgment of the Lord. The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and they are not saved" (Jer. viii).

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK

It is most probable that our Lord spent the night of the first Palm Sunday and of the Monday and Tuesday following in the open air on the slopes of Mount Olivet. "In the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night going out, He abode in the mount that is called Olivet" (St. Luke xxi, 37). "He had not where to lay His head," was true to the end. Perhaps the house of Lazarus at Bethany, where the supper had taken place the previous Saturday, was no longer suitable for Him, for it was well-known to His enemies, who were alert as spies, and our Lord's presence there might have brought trouble to those He loved as friends. We know that in their envy and hatred they thought of killing Lazarus, as well as our Lord (St. John xii, 10), "and the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that if any man knew where He was, he should tell, that they might apprehend Him." So our Lord avoided Bethany on the two days after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem—two strenuous days indeed, days of battle, days of a ruthless unveiling of facts, when the axe was laid to the root of the trees, when our Lord by deeds and by words showed what was dear to Him, and what was an abomination in His eyes. There is an appalling

sternness in the deeds and words of these last two days, a directness and an incisiveness which reveal to us the sincerity of Him who came "to do and to teach," of Him who prefers obedience to sacrifice, and Who warns us against those "who say and do not."

Early on the Monday morning, our Lord "returned into the city," and being hungry, He espied a fig-tree "having leaves, by the wayside, afar off." And "He came to it, if perchance He might find anything on it." There should have been an abundance of figs upon it, for it was covered with leaves, and the fruit appears before the leaves. Clearly, from St. Matthew's narrative, the tree stood alone, not in a clump with others, and therefore was the more conspicuous, as though it were proud of its abundant raiment. Our Lord did not send disciples to gather its fruit for Him, but went up to it Himself, for every traveller had the right to satisfy his hunger by plucking and eating any fruit hanging by the roadside. So our Lord "came up to it, and found nothing on it but leaves only. And He said to it : May no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And immediately the fig-tree began to wither away." And when the disciples passed by next morning, (Tuesday), "they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. And Peter remembering (for he never forgot anything) said to Jesus : Rabbi, behold the fig-tree which thou didst curse, is withered away. And Jesus answering, said to him : Have faith in God." The fig-tree, gorgeously clothed with leaves but barren of fruit, is a picture of those 'who say and do not.' They are ever ready with professions, but their deeds are wanting or unreal. They honour our Lord with their lips, but their heart is far from Him. They are Pharisees of the Pharisees, hypocrites, to be

numbered with those of whom St. Paul writes to St. Timothy : "they have an appearance, indeed, of piety, but deny the power thereof : now these avoid" (2 Tim. iii, 5). True piety has a power to change, and to raise. The Sacraments are engines of divine love to mould human nature to the likeness of the divine, "to form Christ within us, so that we may live, now not we, but that Christ may live in us." "You are my friends," says our Lord, "if you do the things that I command you." Deeds, not words ; efforts, not professions ; fruit, not leaves only. So did our Lord on the eve of His Passion show His detestation of all hollowness, insincerity and hypocrisy. He abhors wolves in sheep's clothing : He cannot gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles ; He proclaims that by our fruits we are to be known, that by our fruits we are to stand or fall. He asks but the goodwill to try, and to try perseveringly, and then some store of fruit is assured. But in our prayers let there be more depth and sincerity, a truer purpose of amendment at confession, a more genuine consecration of ourselves at Holy Communion. "If any man will be My disciple, let him take up his cross daily, and follow Me," for "not every one that saith to Me : Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doth the will of My Father who is in Heaven, he shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

Our Lord then proceeded to Jerusalem, and at once went to the Temple. On the evening of Palm Sunday, "He had viewed all things round about," and had seen much within the sacred precincts to displease Him. And this morning He will act. At the threshold He found many that sold and bought oxen and sheep, tables of money-changers, too, and the chairs of them that sold doves. At the beginning

of His public ministry (St. John ii), He had with a scourge of cords cleansed His Father's house ; He will repeat the deed now ; He cast them out one and all ; He overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the chairs of them that sold doves, and He said to them : "It is written: my house is the house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves." Zeal for His Father's house was eating Him up, nay, "He suffered not that any man should carry a vessel through the temple." Let us learn from this incident to be careful as to our behaviour in church, and to love the beauty and decorum of the house of God. Learn to genuflect with reverence, to avoid all conversations, to follow every detail with close attention. Let us "go up to the temple to pray," and for no other purpose, "that we go back to our house justified" rather than those who pay but scant attention. Our Lord desires in our service of Himself that there be no mixture of motives. We must love Him for His own sake, yielding ourselves to Him with perfect trust and generosity, hoping for nothing thereby. There must be no affection for the spirit of the world or for even one venial sin. We must not be changers of money, and say : "I will obey you, if you give me my reward and plenty now." We must not be sellers of doves, that is of our peace, and say to our Lord : "I will serve you, if you flood my soul with feelings of peace and satisfaction, and free it from all restlessness and struggle." Such devotion is of no value in His sight ; such dispositions never effect a union with Him, but only lead to an intermittent service, and to many sins of omission. He casts them all out, and says : "My house is a house of prayer, of praise, of work that hymns its music to the throne of God above, clear as the song of the lark in the early

morning, unmixed in its motive, resonant with trust, rich with generosity.” And when, at the end, the hungry Master returns by the wayside seeking fruit on the trees of His planting, He shall find much fruit, ripe, sweet and refreshing, the fruit of many a struggle with self, the fruit of obedience and honest endeavour, and He Himself shall pluck and bless it, and speedily clothe the trees with leaves of glory everlasting.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE GREEKS DESIRE TO SEE OUR LORD

WE cannot well exaggerate the effect of our Lord's entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. "The whole city was moved," and "who is this?" was the question on the lips of all. "Now there were certain gentiles among them who came up to adore on the festival day." These Gentiles were Greeks, who had embraced the Jewish faith, though not in its fullness. They too heard the general talk, and became interested in our Lord. And so on the Monday morning, when our Lord had cleansed the Temple courts, and with a scourge of cords had driven out the money changers and them that bought and sold, these Greeks, good, conscientious men, who were grateful for the little lights they had received, and who had undertaken a long journey for the privilege of being in Jerusalem on the Festival day, accosted St. Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and said to him: "Sir, we would see Jesus." Their good-will is to be rewarded. Like all Greeks, they were men of intelligence and culture, and moreover honest and sincere in their search for truth, but too lowly-minded to venture to approach our Lord in person. They shared the humility of the centurion, who said, "Lord, I am not

worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof." And so they went to one of the disciples of our Lord, in the hope of perhaps gaining the favour of an introduction to Him.

"They came therefore to Philip." Philip is a Greek name, and this may have been the reason why they chose him. And they desired him, saying : "Sir, we would see Jesus," words most simple, which involve the petition : "Do you think it possible ? Can you help us in any way ?" "Philip cometh, and telleth Andrew"—(and Andrew, like Philip, is a Greek name) "and Andrew and Philip tell Jesus."

The combination of the two names leads to the conjecture that both were a little nervous of going to our Lord in this matter. He had said to the disciples so explicitly : "Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles, and into the cities of the Samaritans enter ye not, but go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" ; and even of Himself our Lord had said : "I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel," adding, "it is not good to take the bread of the children and cast it to the dogs." These instructions were definite and strong, and so these two Apostles might well feel the awkwardness of bringing Greeks to our Lord, gladly as they would have brought Jews. Moreover, when Andrew and Philip did speak to our Lord on the subject, no words of welcome fell from His lips, no blessing was bestowed, no sign of joy was manifested at the new aspirants coming for instruction. "Bring him to me," our Lord had exclaimed, with all the desire of His sacred Heart, to the father of the demoniac boy. But now our Lord's bearing is but a repetition of His first reception of the Syro-Phoenician woman. "He answered her never a word." Yet, surely, here lay a great and glorious opportunity. As a Child at

Bethlehem our Lord had begun by receiving the homage of the heathen-East in the person of the kings ; shall He not close His life by receiving the homage and submission of the heathen-West in the person of these good Greeks ? But Jesus answered the two disciples, saying : “The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.”

Some light is here thrown on the mysteries of Divine Providence, some assurance is given that the dispensation of heavenly graces is mysterious, and beyond our powers to understand. God has His times and seasons. He calls one, and leaves another. Two men are working in the field, one is taken, the other is left ; to one is given the light of truth, to another it is denied. So it is here ; the time for the Gentile world to be filled with “the good tidings of great joy” has not yet come. Our Lord was not to do that work in person. The Apostles would prove to be His instruments for it, and as yet they were not ready. And so our Lord made no reply to these men, full of good-will though they seemed to be. He only spoke in general terms, yet in words which disclose what must be the mind and spirit of those who at any time would “see Jesus.” To see our Lord, is to hear His voice, and to obey Him. To see Him, is to recognise in Him the Saviour of the world, and to take up our cross and follow Him. In a word, to see Him is a call to action. Our Lord seems to say : “For many months I have preached to My chosen ones, and by signs and wonders and words convinced them of what I am, and of the Kingdom I have come to erect. It is now the eleventh hour and lo ! the Gentiles come to Me also. Indeed the hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified, and He will be glorified not with a crown of glory, but with one of thorns and pain, not by

being exalted on a pinnacle of fame, but by falling into the ground and dying. Amen, Amen I say to you, unless the grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, itself remaineth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit. This is My road to victory, and it must be yours also ; for the servant is not above his Lord. If you would be My disciples indeed, and carry My Name before Kings and Gentiles, you must fall into the ground and die to self, else you remain alone, and yield no fruit. You must drink of the torrent by the way, if you would lift up your head ; you must be obedient, if you would speak of victory. He that loveth his life shall lost it ; and that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal. If any man minister to Me, let him follow Me, and where I am there also shall My ministers be. If any man minister to me, him will My Father honour."

Thus did our Lord unfold the strange secrets of all success in life. These are the endowments of His Kingdom ; these are the instruments of His warfare against the world. The world derides them, and they are a scandal and a folly to it : yet they have stood the test of time, and their wisdom does but grow and shine out the more with the lapse of years. They have peopled Heaven's courts with many Saints. Have we yet learnt their beauty, and sought to clothe our lives and work with principles so sublime, bequeathed to us at the moment when, in the person of these Greeks, our Lord saw the universality and splendour of His Kingdom of which there shall be no end ? These were hard sayings which our Lord had just spoken, but they came hardest on Himself, for they were a prophecy of His approaching Passion, and revealed that Passion as the one means by which His life and work were to bear fruit. They drew our Lord's attention to the

awful scenes that now were so near at hand ; they almost plunged Him into His agony, and caused Him to feel the smart of lash and thorn, the blow of reed and hammer, before their time. And from His lips there then fell words that are a very prelude to the prayer of the Agony in the Garden : "Now is My soul troubled," He cried. "And what shall I say ? Father save Me from this hour, but for this cause I came unto this hour." How like the prayer on the first Holy Thursday night : "My soul is sorrowful unto death : Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me, yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt." So our Lord prayed in anticipation : "Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say ? Father, save Me from this hour ; but for this cause came I unto this hour." And at once He added : "Father, glorify Thy Name"—as though He would say : "I accept this hour of My Passion and all it entails : but grant that the chastisement of Thy Son may show forth to all Thy children that Thou are first and foremost a Father to them, that they may dare to cry unto Thee : Abba, Father." And at those words, a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." It was proclaimed at His Baptism, and at His Transfiguration, at His lowliness and at His glory ; and now it shall be proclaimed on Good Friday first, and on Easter Day, in His obedience and then in His power. The law is ever the same, through the cross to the crown.

And then our Lord drew the incident to a close. "This voice," He said, "came not because of Me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of the world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself. Yet a little while, the light is

among you. Walk whilst you have the light, that the darkness overtake you not. Whilst you have the light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of the light."

"These things Jesus spoke, and He went away, and hid Himself from them." He need say no more. If, like the Greeks in Jerusalem, "we desire to see Jesus," we must first look with intelligence and sincerity on Him whom we have pierced : and then by the law of self-control, of falling into the ground and dying to self that we may live to God, endeavour to follow Him and so bring forth much fruit ; that after life is over, in the Kingdom planted and established by the Precious Blood of Christ, we may see Jesus in His glory, crowned with honour, face to face, seated at the right hand of that Father whose name, as oil poured out on troubled seas, He proclaimed to the world for our comfort and encouragement in this vale of tears, where we see Him only through a glass, in a dark manner.

## CHAPTER X

### THE TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK

THERE is no day in the life of our Lord, of which Holy Scripture gives so full an account, as of the Tuesday before the first Good Friday. It was one of the busiest of His days on earth. His enemies were active, and He was equally so, and from the number of questions asked and answered in the course of it, it has been called the Day of Questions. Early in the morning, having found His rest on Mount Olivet during the night, accompanied by His disciples, our Lord returned to Jerusalem, to the Temple. On the way, they passed the withered fig-tree, and saw it shrivelled and dried up from the roots. And then the day's work began by preaching the glad tidings of the Gospel to the people, and before sundown our Lord had refuted first the priests and ancients, then the Pharisees and Herodians, and finally the Sadducees. Over and above this, He spoke at least four parables, those of the Two Sons, of the Wicked Husbandmen, of the Ten Virgins, and of the Talents ; then He delivered His awful denunciation of the Pharisees and their confederates, and, lastly, at great length prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem, and foretold the signs that shall come to pass at the end of the world. On this day, our

Lord faced the world for the last time in judgment and in power, to refute its sophistries, to establish His claims, before He humbled Himself to the obedience of death.

The description in the Gospels is full of genuine Oriental local colouring. We can clearly see our Lord in the precincts of the Temple, with many hanging on His words, and "hearing Him gladly," when suddenly quite a number of the chief priests and scribes, with some ancients, arrive on the scene, and accost Him. Every one made way for them, and at once they ask an angry hostile question. "Tell us," they say, "by what authority doest Thou these things? or, who is he that hath given Thee this authority?" "These things," forsooth! Why not call them by their true name, not by such a term of contempt? There are raisings from the dead, and healings of the sick, and deeds of power and mercy in many a shape. Face them candidly, you hypocrites, and never need you have asked your question at all. By what authority indeed! Could it be any but divine?

But our Lord, seeing their hypocrisy, replied. "I will also ask you one thing, which if you shall tell me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men?" But they thought within themselves, saying: "If we shall say from heaven, He will say to us, why did you not believe him? But if we shall say from men the whole people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet indeed. And they answered that they knew not whence it was." It was a lie, and a cowardly lie, and our Lord dismissed them saying: "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Soon another set of enemies are ready, armed with a question that they felt sure would involve our Lord in an insurmountable difficulty. "They were on the watch, and sent spies, who should feign themselves just, that they might take hold of Him in His words, and so deliver Him up to the authority and power of Pilate, the governor." They consisted of Pharisees and Herodians—a strange combination, for their hatred of one another was intense, yet they gladly united to persecute our Lord. Most clever was their question, and they led up to it by flattery. "Master, we know that Thou speakest and teachest rightly, and Thou dost not respect any person, but teachest the way of God in truth. Tell us therefore what dost Thou think, is it lawful for us to give tribute to Cæsar, or not? But Jesus knowing their wickedness, said: Why tempt you Me, ye hypocrites? Bring Me a penny that I may see it. And they brought it Him. And He saith to them, whose is this image and inscription? They say to Him, Cæsar's. And Jesus answering said to them: Render, therefore, to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at Him: they could not reprehend His word before the people, and wondering at His answer, they held their peace, and leaving Him went their ways."

Yet a third batch of enemies now comes upon the scene—the Sadducees, who deny that there is any resurrection. They put an impossible case to our Lord, basing it, as they thought, on a provision in the Mosaic Law. A man with six brothers married and died, leaving no children. So the next brother married the widow, as was the law, and he also died childless. And the third took her, and in like manner all seven, and they died leaving no children. Last of all the woman died also. In the resurrection there-

fore, when they shall rise again, whose wife shall she be of them ? for all the seven had her to wife. Our Lord replied, showing how in the next world, they that are accounted worthy of it shall neither be married nor take wives, nor do they die any more, but are equal to the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. And the multitude hearing it, were in admiration at His doctrine. And some of the scribes answering, said to Him: "Master thou hast spoken well. And after that they durst not ask Him any more questions."

How truly do these three questions depict for us the attitude towards our Lord of those who love Him not. They do not ignore Him, for they cannot ; His voice is too clear, His work too manifest, His influence too widespread, His claims too urgent for that. And so they ply Him with questions that bear the features of these we have just described. The first is a question of distrust. "But what authority do you do these things?" Must I submit ? am I bound to obey ? make it more clear for me, and tell me to how far I am bound to go. They begin to grow weary in the Lord's service, and before long they have sided with the enemies of the Cross, and approaching our Lord with indignation and hatred, they ask : "is it lawful to give tribute to the world or not ?" Even this is not the end : soon they deny the life beyond the grave, and cast aside the issues of Eternity. They laugh our Lord to scorn, and walk no more with Him : their last state is worse than their first.

And now our Lord in turn asked the assembled Pharisees a question : "What think you of Christ ? Whose Son is He ?" It is the question of questions : on the answer to it our whole faith and conduct depend : and indeed there is material for an answer to it.

“What think you of Christ ?” Has He at all renewed the face of the earth ? is the world the better and the happier for His coming? does His teaching make for righteousness, for law, and order, and peace? is there a flaw in His life, and work, and words ? is the influence of His Church beneficial to the welfare of men ? In spite of many mistakes, through human frailty, for scandals must needs come, how superb has been her influence, how widespread her charity, how firm and strong the support of her saving arms ! In public, in her dealings with Kings and empires, above all in private, as a mother to her children, how splendid is her record ! What think you of Christ ? Whose Son is He ? Not David’s, no, for He is Christ the Son of the living God, our Saviour, our Teacher, our Lord and our God, who has the words of eternal life. “Master, we have known and we believe that Thou camest forth from God.” This should be our confession, joining those who nineteen hundred years ago were unable to answer Him a word, and who from that day did not dare to ask Him any more questions.

A few months before, in the wayside by Cæsarea Philippi, our Lord had asked His disciples : “Whom do men say that I am ?” It was the same question that He now put to the Pharisees. “Some say Elias, or Jeremias, or one of the prophets”—was then the reply. “But whom do you say that I am ?” added our Lord. “Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God”—was Peter’s profession of faith, rewarded at once by our Lord’s revealing to him the great office he was ever to hold in His Church. Again when Caiaphas asked our Lord : “I adjure Thee, by the living God to tell me if Thou be the Christ the Son of the living God or not ?” had He replied : “I am the son of David” a mere man like unto yourselves, His trial would have ended and His innocence would

have been declared. But He replied : "I am : and you shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven to judge the world." There was the blasphemy, there was the ground for condemnation. "Away with Him, away with Him," for "He being a man, maketh Himself the Son of God." Our Lord died to prove that He was God as well as man : He died to prove the union of the two natures in one Divine Person—"The Word was God" and "the Word was made Flesh"—that adorable truth without which our faith is vain. It is on this point that so many outside the Church have gone wrong. All true teaching flows from that one glorious spring : all false and misty teaching flow from its denial, or from hazy notions as to its reality and importance. "Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God, and true Man." Dogma is the basis of devotion.

Lastly, our Lord spoke His denunciation of the things and people that are not according to His Heart. "Beware," He said, "of those who love salutations, and the first chairs, and the chief rooms at feasts, who feign long prayers, and devour the houses of widows. Woe to those who leave aside the weightier things of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith, who make clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but within are full of rapine and uncleanness. Woe to those who are like to whitened sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of all filthiness." Then He turns our thoughts to the end of the world, to the consummation of all things, bidding us watch and pray, bidding us be patient and endure, that when "there shall come signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves, men withering away for fear and

expectation of what shall come upon the whole world—when the powers of heaven shall be moved and the Son of man shall be seen coming in a cloud with great power and majesty—then we may look up and lift up our heads ; for summer is nigh, the Kingdom of God and our redemption are at hand.”

Let us here remind ourselves of another scene, when our Lord asked one of His own this question, with a view to his amendment. (St. John xxi, 15.) St. Peter has met his Lord for the first time since his denial of Him, and has met Him alone, and the question is put : “Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me ? What thinkest thou of Me ? Do My work and thought for you deserve your love and trust ? Has what I have told you proved true ? Have I ever failed you?” Every day is to us a Day of Questions, when our bearing towards our Lord should be faced and righted. Is there within us aught of that cold, questioning spirit towards Him, which foments pride, calls forth a resistance to grace, is the very death of all generosity, and so often explains a life that is marked by an uneven, irregular, tepid service of our Lord ? We ask why He chose to redeem the world as He did, why to profit by His Redemption should entail such sacrifices and strictness. Is there no cheaper road to our home with God ? Has not the time come when we “dare not ask Him any more such questions ?” Can we answer Him a word ? He is Christ the son of the living God, the Prince of Peace, the Saviour of men, the One who has spoken to us the truth. We will put on the Lord Jesus, and walk in love as most dear children, bearing all things, enduring all things, hoping all things, believing all things, never falling away, pressed onwards to the mark by the charity of Christ. “Lord, to whom shall we go ?” Let this be our

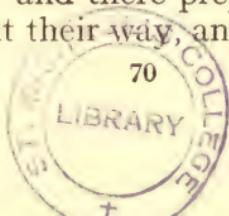
question. "Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we have believed and have known that Thou camest forth from God."

"Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. Whatever song lies within my life, whatever possibility of achievement, whatever measure of success, I owe it all to you, dear Lord. You have made clear to me the real meaning of life, you have taught me how to find beauty in the grey days, you have made the whole world other. I feel I can best serve you by passing on to everyone I meet, the gladness which you have always given to me—and if I be told now to name a wish, I would ask to be to someone such a friend as you have ever been to me."

## CHAPTER XI

### THE PREPARATION OF THE PASCHAL SUPPER

IT is clear from the sacred narrative that not only to our Lord, but also to the minds of the twelve disciples, the preparation of the Paschal Supper was a matter of great moment. The one which was eaten just before the Sacred Passion was the third they had celebrated together, and as the day drew near, the thoughts of the Twelve were directed to the coming solemnity, and were full of that spirit of reverence, thoughtfulness, and joyful anticipation, which helps us so much to profit by the great Feasts of the year as we should. It is to be noted that the disciples went to our Lord of their own accord about the matter ; they were not summoned by Him but enquired of themselves : "Whither wilt Thou that we go and prepare for Thee to eat the Pasch ?" "And He sent Peter and John, and saith to them : Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water, follow him, and whithersoever he shall go in, say to the master of the house, 'The Master saith, My time is near at hand, where is My refectory where I may eat the Pasch with My disciples ?' And he will show you a large dining-room furnished : and there prepare ye for us. And His disciples went their way, and came into the city,



and they found as He had told them, and they prepared the Pasch."

There is something most solemn and affecting in this simple scene recorded by three of the Evangelists, but, as usual, with great fullness by St. Mark. For the second time in one short week our Lord has revealed His knowledge of events and groupings at a distance. It is a revelation of the friendly intercourse between our Lord and His own, of the depth and reality of their friendship, and it is for all time a beautiful instruction to those who would prepare well for Holy Communion. There is first of all the solemn warning to prepare with thought and care, for a Communion depends for its fruit in great measure on its preparation. Preparation is mainly our own work ; it depends upon our good-will, on our desire to be drawn into closer union with our Lord. "Draw me, and we will run after Thee." It should move us to the depths. "The work is great, for a house is prepared not for men, but for God." "Thou hast prepared a Table before Me against them that afflict Me." There should be recollection, a care to be very pure, a sorrow for our sinfulness, a desire for perfection, a willingness to resist unto blood, a craving for strength to bear a burden ; there should be joy as of a soul about to leave purgatory and enter heaven ; faith, hope, charity, contrition, humility, and desire—all these have their full and necessary part to play. "O come ye to Him, and be enlightened; taste and see that the Lord is sweet."

It is a grievous matter when Communions are made, as so often they are, without any due preparation at all ; it is a grievous matter too when, as so often happens, Communions are not made at all, because of sloth and indifference, when the loving invitation to draw near has been given. "Come unto

Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you : take this Gift from God, wherewith you shall overthrow the adversaries"; but all at once begin to make excuse.

The task of preparing the Paschal Supper was a heavy one, and involved much attention to details. What directions did our Lord issue concerning it ? Whom did He send ? He sent Peter and John, the apostles of zeal and of purity. Mingle the two together and you have desire. "As the hart pants after the fountains of water, so does my soul pant after Thee, my Lord and my God." "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer," said our Lord, and let us say the same. With desire I desire for my Communion with Thee, before I go forth to my work fraught with pain, but all to be borne for Thee, to my labour fraught with responsibility, but all to be done for Thee. "Look on me, and make me increase : my eyes shall be enlightened when I have tasted a little of Thy honey : in the strength of that Food, I shall walk to the mount of God." So our Lord sent Peter and John to prepare the Pasch, and He said to them : "Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water : follow him." Who is this man that meets us as we approach the City of the King to be fed at His banquet ? It is our confessor, and he bears a pitcher of clear, cool water, with which to wash our feet, that we be wholly clean. We are bidden "follow him," for our Lord will put into his mind and heart what He would have us to do. Often does our Lord show His good pleasure thus to employ an intermediary for the declaration of His will, and for the execution of His work in our souls. To St. Paul at Damascus, Ananias was sent to bring comfort and direction :

and to each of us "a man carrying a pitcher of water" is sent, to aid us to prepare worthily to receive our Lord. He is not the master of the House, he is but a servant, yea, the servant of the servants of God, whose delight is to be with the children of men, that he may refresh them, and do them service. And when the Master of all cometh, and asketh "where is my refectory, where I may eat the Pasch with My disciples"? the man carrying a pitcher of water will show you a large dining-room furnished ! Yes, his office is precisely to show ! He cannot force, he cannot order : he can but suggest and show. If you allow him to do so, he will show you the size of the room, the possibilities of sanctity, the vast spaces of love, the boundless opportunities of giving glory to God in the highest and of promoting peace on earth, which are within the reach of us all, He will also show the room to you furnished, clean from all stain, carpeted and cushioned with good desires and resolves, so that our Lord may enter there, and find where to lay His head. There you may prepare the Pasch.

It is worthy of remark that the two Evangelists, St. Mark and St. Luke, who record the adjectives used by our Lord as to the room to be prepared, both record the same. It is a large room ; it is also furnished. And those two words suggest to us the true and fitting preparation for Holy Communion. For if our hearts be anything but large, if they be contracted by love of self, by an unbending pride, by some nurtured impatience, by some freezing indifference, some hardening spirit of unwillingness to forgive, if they be unfurnished, by want of forethought and care, by slovenly preparation, by want of generosity, by the absence of any spirit of reparation, then the visits of our Lord, frequent

though they be, can hardly leave their mark or bear the fruit they should. The Blessed Sacrament should be the joy and centre of our lives ; let us attempt to make it so by careful preparation for each Communion ; let each be made as though it were to be our last, that "when evening is come," when the day of life draws in and the sun is setting below the horizon, "our Lord may come with the Twelve," borne in the hands of His priests, to prepare us for our last Passover, from the land of bondage to that of liberty and peace eternal. "Blessed is he that shall thus eat Bread in the Kingdom of God." "How great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee!"

## CHAPTER XII

### AT BETHANY

THE order of events in the last week of our Lord's life on earth is most clearly and definitely chronicled in the Gospels. For the rest of His three years of Public Life, we know only approximately the order of the miracles and discourses—"of the things which Jesus began to do and to teach"—but from the eve of Palm Sunday to the evening of Easter Day we know exactly to the day what our Lord did and said. "In the day-time," says St. Luke (xxi, 37), "He was teaching in the Temple: but at night going out, He abode (or 'lodged' as the word implies) in the mount that is called Olivet, and all the people came early in the morning to Him in the temple to hear Him."

So we have come to the evening of Tuesday, and it is clear from the sacred narrative that on the Wednesday our Lord was in retirement, and at some small distance from the city. The disciples who on the Thursday prepared the Last Supper, were told: "Go ye into the city,"—words that imply that they were further from Jerusalem than the Mount of Olives, which is practically a part of it. So we may rest assured that our Lord spent that Wednesday at Bethany, in the house of Martha and Mary and

Lazarus, in retirement and at rest—with those whom He called His friends.

Of these quiet hours Holy Scripture gives us no account, for it seems never to record seasons of peace, such as were the days at Nazareth. We must re-construct them for ourselves as best we may, with the light reflected from other passages in Scripture. St. John comes to our help here. “Before the festival day of the Pasch, Jesus knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” Indeed we have here a tender setting of the last quiet day at Bethany, before the storm of the Passion breaks. This is now our Lord’s thought—His end, His farewell to the world, His friends, and what He could do for them to the last. He is no stranger at Bethany ; “Jesus loved Martha and her sister Mary, and Lazarus.” On the previous Saturday, they had “made Him a supper there, and Martha had served,” as she always did, but this time with less agitation than on a previous occasion when our Lord had rebuked her tenderly for her impatience. Mary Magdalen had then anointed our Lord’s head and feet, and “the whole house was filled with the odour of the ointment.” And now it is Wednesday ; the sweet fragrance has not died away, and perhaps it is renewed ; and our Lord is with the same friends as before, though one is absent for a great part of the day, for then it was that Judas went back to Jerusalem, to arrange the betrayal of his Master for a paltry sum of money.

As we contemplate this wonderful day in the life of our Lord, let us bear in mind the words that had lately more than once fallen from His lips upon the ears of those very friends : “*you* know that after two

days the Son of Man shall be delivered up to be crucified." Yes, "after two days"—and this is the first of them, and on the second He is to go to Jerusalem for the Pasch ; therefore (so Martha and Mary would think) if the Master's words are to be taken literally (and they were definite indeed), this is our last day with Him. Had He not but three days ago in that very house spoken of being "anointed beforehand for His burial ?" So this is our last day with the Master who has come to us, who came to us in our sorrow when Lazarus, our brother, died, and turned that sorrow into joy !

There was Martha, so generous, so glad to welcome the Lord, preparing what she could for Him. She was changed from what she had been : once she had been almost rude to our Lord, and unkind to her sister Mary, but not so now ; she had seen her brother raised from the dead, she had learnt many a lesson, and our Lord called her "friend !" "He loved Martha." There was Mary Magdalen ; surely on that day she again had some quiet moments at our Lord's feet, once more to confess, and be absolved ; and assuredly her tears must have flowed fast for is it not the tension of knowing that soon you are to lose a friend and "see his face no more" most hard to bear. It is hard to speak aright at such times, for one's utterance is broken by sobs. There, too, were the Apostles, the faithful Eleven, tired and anxious, for it is the end of three happy years, their last day with the Master who called them His friends, for they had "continued with Him in His temptations." What must St. Peter have suffered on that day ? Once he had made a protest against the Sacred Passion, and had received a rebuke he could never forget—the strongest our Lord ever gave to anyone. (St. Matth. xvi, 23.) He will not make that protest

again, but he loved his Lord intensely, and those words about the Passion and its details rang in his ears ; he has time to think of them to-day, for at Bethany all is quiet and peaceful, the rush of the last three days at Jerusalem is over, and Martha and Mary and Lazarus would confer with the Eleven, as friends do about some awful rumour that is likely soon to be fulfilled. They would get together in little groups, and with bated breath discuss the possibilities, yet "none of them would venture to ask our Lord about it," and tears would flood their eyes, and their heart would be troubled, and they would be afraid, and perchance Jesus knew that they had a mind to ask Him, yet He had spoken "so openly" to them, and so frequently : He need not speak again.

There, too, was our Lady. The day was not far distant when all the disciples would be "persevering in one mind in prayer with the women, and with Mary the mother of Jesus, awaiting the coming of the Holy Ghost" (Acts i, 14), and surely there is almost a rehearsal of this scene at Bethany now. Yet our Lady would not disclose the secrets of her heart, for the hour had not yet come when she would gather her children around her, and they in turn would rise up, and call her blessed. The solemn inauguration of that hour is to be made at the foot of the Cross, and meanwhile the Blessed Mother is with the little company at Bethany for our Lord's last day of rest on earth. They find "the Child with Mary its mother": Bethlehem and Nazareth are now united at Bethany, on a day of prayer, full of sweet memories, of peace and friendship. The story of the three years is now unfolded in a series of pictures : "He has gone about doing good," and the beauty and glory of that record stand out to-day in the calm and retirement of Bethany ! Everyone feels

what our Lord has been to them ! Each has his or her tale to tell ! Each sheep of the flock is called by name ! No two have the same record—but all will join in the hymn of praise, and sing from grateful hearts : “How good is God to Israel, to them that are of a right heart” (Ps. lxxiii, 1) ; “the Lord is good to those whose hope is in Him, to souls that seek Him” (Lam. iii, 25) ; “my soul shall rejoice in the Lord, and shall be delighted in His salvation” (Ps. xxxiv, 9) ; “great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised” (Ps. cxlv, 3).

So was it a day of retreat for all, of rest before the battle so near at hand. A “strong man armed” was at the door ready to wrestle, confident in his strength ; a very Goliath was challenging the Shepherd-king to a fight. There was foreboding and anxiety in the breast of all, but our Lord was the centre, and all were drawn to Him by gratitude, by a strong personal love. Then did He bless and sanctify true friendship ; then did He show that “a faithful friend is a strong defence, and he that hath found him, hath found a treasure” (Eccles. vi, 14). Bethany, that day, was as the sanctuary of a Christian Church, warm with devotion, full of the fragrance of prayer, proclaiming the beauty of purity, a beautiful mingling of joy and sorrow, of peace and struggle, a perfect reflection of our life here below, where they that sow in tears reap in joy, where through the storm we see the shore of peace and plenty, and where every joy is tempered with sorrow.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE WASHING OF THE FEET

"BEFORE the festival day of the Pasch, Jesus knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end."

There are scenes in the life of our Lord that not only teach their own special lesson, but in a very marked and beautiful way seem to embrace every feature of the Incarnation, every mark of the spirit of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This is true, for example, of the first miracle our Lord ever worked, the changing the water into wine at the marriage feast of Cana ; it is also true of the scene of the washing of the Feet at the Last Supper. The Apostles with their Master are gathered together in the "large and furnished dining-room" at Jerusalem, to eat the Paschal Supper according to the Jewish rite. All has been most carefully prepared : all is carried out with great exactitude. It is the last time they shall ever meet in sweet and intimate intercourse, and the Apostles knew it, or at least strongly suspected that such was the case. It is not possible to fathom the feelings of those twelve men for their Master on this "night in which He was betrayed." One of them indeed was a devil already, for Satan had entered into him, and

every noble feeling of love and gratitude was crushed ; but the rest were “ready to go with Him to prison and to death.” For three years they had dwelt with Him, and had seen His miracles, and heard His words ; they had grown to know Him, and to know Him was to love Him, and now the last night has come and their thought would be : “what can we say to the Master ? what can we do for Him ? what can we bestow upon Him ?” We know what it is to desire earnestly to help a friend, and yet to be utterly at a loss as to what to do. Such a pain (for pain indeed it is) the Apostles must then have felt. Probably they yearned to ask our Lord again to say definitely whether what He had foretold concerning His Passion was literally to be fulfilled. And our Lord would know that they had a mind to ask Him, but they were afraid. “You know,” He had so clearly said, “that after two days shall be the Pasch, and the Son of Man shall (then) be delivered up to be crucified.” The two days are nearly run out now, and the end cannot be far distant. And in the few hours that remain, our Lord, as never perchance before, shall be the one to offer gifts and service, to impart lessons and consolation. The Apostles are to be passive recipients of all, as surprise after surprise awaits them, and gift after gift is bestowed. And the washing of their feet is the first act of the kind, and it had never been done before. Our Lord when the supper was over, “riseth from the table, and layeth aside His garments, and having taken a towel, girdeth Himself. After that, He putteth water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of the disciples, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.” How the disciples must have “looked upon one another” as they saw their Master act in this unprecedented way !

“He cometh therefore to Simon Peter.” Love is

often restrained by love, and here the love of our Lord almost meets its match in the warm love of that Apostle. Before him, on His knees at his feet, he sees the Master who has raised the dead to life, who has been transfigured on the mountain, who has given sight to one born blind, anxious to wash his feet, and then to wipe them with a towel. At least he will make quite sure of the facts, and so he asks : "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet ?" Jesus answered, and said to him : "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Peter saith to Him : "Thou shalt never wash my feet. As long as I live, one thing at any rate you shall never do, you shall never wash my feet" :—a reply so in keeping with St. Peter's warm and impetuous spirit. Jesus answered him : "If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with Me." These words gain the day ; the price must be paid, for the disciple cannot be severed from his Lord ; he must yield ; but when love is strongest then also is it most bold, and so St. Peter makes reply : "Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." "Wash me yet more." Jesus saith to him : "He that is washed, needeth not but to wash his feet, and is wholly clean." So our Lord was free to carry out His work, and He passed from one to another. He washed the feet of Peter, and of Judas, and of John, and of them all, "in the midst of them as one that serveth," though that very night one of them would deny Him many times, one of them would betray Him, and all of them would desert Him in His hour of danger.

Then "after Jesus had washed their feet and taken His garments, being sat down again, He said to them: Know you what I have done to you ? You call Me Master, and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If then I, being your Lord and Master, have washed

your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also. Amen, amen, I say to you, the servant is not greater than his Lord, neither is the apostle greater than he that sent him. If you know these things, you shall be blessed, if you do them."

Our Lord by His Incarnation is ever at our feet, divested of the robes of His power and majesty, to wash those feet that come into contact with things of earth, that we be clean of heart, and fit to see God. If He wash us not, we shall have no part with Him. Cleanliness of soul He must have ; we may be weak, and unstable, but clean we can be, and clean we must be, and only He can make us so. "Know you what I have done to you?" Indeed we do not know now, but we shall do so hereafter, if we be faithful in few things.

But our Lord makes this lowly deed the basis of a practical instruction, an enforcement of the new law "to love one another, as He has loved us." "If, then, I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also. If you know these things, you shall be blessed if you do them." If I help you, you are to help others ; if I forgive you, you are to forgive others ; if I love you, you are to love others. I cannot wash your feet, unless you in turn wash the feet of others. Your purity of life is proportioned to your spirit of charity to your neighbour. How many there are whose harvest of fruit is blighted by the abiding presence within them of a spirit that, in one way or another, is opposed to the charity of Christ, which presseth us! They are wholly unwilling to kneel and wash one another's feet. No charity is worthy of

the name that is not heroic in its degree. It may be our portion to live and associate with others who do not harmonise with our natural disposition. In many ways we like them, for many reasons we are drawn to them, and even grateful to them ; but there is a something that mars the closeness of our union, and cools the warmth of our love and interest. Perhaps we feel sure that God wishes us to be of use to them and that He asks this service of us ; but we content ourselves with being barely civil, and from time to time of course we fail, and there is a dispute, and past efforts seem thrown away. We did not go far enough, we did not kneel to wash their feet. We made no effort to enter into their lives, and show an interest in their plans, and volunteer little services for them, heedless that probably we should never receive the same from them in return. This would be to wash their feet, it wins more hearts than gold and silver, it is the charity of Christ, and it is heroic.

Again, how often people allow themselves to be ruled by their likes and dislikes ! They take the most unreasonable dislike to their neighbour, and though at first it be small in its force and effect, quickly it becomes deep-rooted and fixed, and ends in something very akin to positive hatred. Ask them the reason why, and they probably can give you none, or a paltry one at best, quite out of proportion to the bitter lengths to which it is allowed to go. Oh, for the love that sees good in all, and desires to be kind to all ! Oh, for the wisdom that teaches us that we can help all, and encourage all, and bids us lay such animosities aside ! But so often the very reverse is the case, and having taken a dislike to certain people, we pursue them with a persecution as persistent as it is cruel, we thwart them in any and every way we can, we avoid them whenever possible. Never

do we spare them, if we can scourge them with the wounding thongs of bitter words ! we love to ridicule them, heedless of the pain we may be causing them, and we never can see ought of good in them. "If you know these things, you shall be blessed if you avoid them."

Let us be at peace with all, and gladly kneel to wash the feet of pilgrims bound to the same eternal home as ourselves ; unless we do so, we have no real part with them, no real part with our Lord. Let us love hospitality, and seek to be kind ; let us grudge no sacrifice of time to make the life of another more bright and happy. Let us fear more and more the punishment of God on those who are unkind, who will not forgive, who are hard of heart, who give pain by their pride and want of tenderness. Let us fear more and more ever to make the life of others difficult and unhappy by our frigid conduct and disdainful manner. Let the charity of the Prince of Peace be ours ; let His example be our guide and encouragement, who, on the night in which He was betrayed, washed the feet of His own, and said to us all : "If I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also." "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, and that preacheth peace" (Is. lii, 7).

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BETRAYER

"HAVE I not chosen you twelve ; and one of you is a devil," are words spoken by our Lord to His own twelve months before "the night in which He was betrayed" (St. John vi, 71). They are words quite unique in their awful severity among the utterances of our Lord, and they were spoken at the end of the miracle of feeding the five thousand in the desert. Never had any deed of our Lord called forth a greater measure of enthusiasm. When they saw what a miracle Jesus had done, they said : "This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the world," and they were about "to take our Lord, by force and make Him king, but He fled again into the mountain, Himself alone." On the next day, however, having crossed the lake in the night, He spoke to the multitude who had followed Him, His discourse concerning the Bread from heaven which He would one day bestow, the Bread that giveth life to the world, and of which a type had been given in the repast they had enjoyed the day before. Where is their enthusiasm now ; where is their faith ? It has vanished. The triumph of yesterday ends to-day in failure, for many of the disciples hearing these words of loving promise, murmured and said to another :

"This saying is hard, who can hear it? and they went back, and walked no more with our Lord."

A whole year, then, at least before the night of the betrayal, Satan had entered into the heart of Judas, and our Lord had revealed the fact to him as a kindly warning. Judas was possessed by a love of gold, and would have enjoyed the enthusiasm of the multitude at the miracle of the feeding, and have supported them in their idea of making our Lord a king. "It has come at last," he would say ; "for two years have I heard about this kingdom, and now at length I see its beginning, and my dream will be fulfilled. I shall be the keeper of the purse to my King and Master, and all that I have sacrificed to obey His call, will be abundantly made good to me." But his dream is soon dispelled, and his anger and disappointment are great. The old passion is his master, and he is tempted "to walk no more with our Lord." And so he went on for a whole year ! And for all that time our Lord endured his sullen demeanour, his want of friendliness, with never a word of rebuke, but always with patience.

It is perhaps a little strange that not one word from the lips of Judas to our Lord is recorded in the Gospels, yet he must often have spoken to Him. Thomas speaks, so does Andrew, so does Philip, so do others still more : why not Judas, who held a position of trust among the Twelve ? Is it that in all he said to our Lord there was a tone of insolence, of complaining, of asking the why and wherefore for everything, and that our Lord would wish all such words forgotten ? If so, it does but enhance the beauty and patient forbearance of our Lord's behaviour to Judas, especially during the last year of His life on earth. How hard it is to live with people who are opposed to us, who thwart us in countless little ways, who

irritate us, who are always unfriendly, unkind, devoid of sympathy and encouragement, cold and distant, who have no kind intentions and feeling towards us !

So for a whole year before the end did our Lord bear with the Apostle of whom He had said : "Have I not chosen you twelve ? and one of you is a devil." Time had been when Judas loved our Lord, and believed in Him, and was ready to suffer for Him ; but a change had come ; one bad habit (and so far as we know, only one) had gained the upper hand, and after two years of companionship, all faith and love have gone, the willingness to believe has gone ; mortal sin has taken its place, and Judas is a devil—and our Lord tells him so quite plainly !

It was in love for Judas that our Lord thus spoke : it was to give him a great grace, a warning most precious, and had he availed himself of it, how different would the future have been ! Had he entered into himself, and gone to our Lord, and confessed to his double dealings, and sought pardon, and begged for light, and craved for counsel, and framed a noble resolve, he would be one of the Twelve now, judging the twelve tribes of Israel ; but the warning failed. For our own part we may learn that plain-speaking is sometimes a duty, sometimes a kindness. We flinch from being told the truth about ourselves : we resent the sting of being told that we are a prey to impatience, envy, curiosity, and the like : yet, if with humility we listen, if with generosity we drink in the truth of such words, it may be, nay, it will be, a very grace to us, turning us to God, a fresh start in the upward path. But if, like Judas, as so often happens, we resent and reject the warning of the Lord, considering it ill-timed and excessive, it will leave us worse than before, and we may find ourselves

among those who are “about to betray” Him. Let us learn, too, before passing on, the hardening, blinding power of even one bad habit that receives no proper attention and check. What good there was once in Judas, how is the fine gold become dim ! how is his finest colour changed by one unlawful affection ! “Enlighten our eyes, O Lord, that we may never sleep in death : it is good for me that Thou dost humble me : let me know myself, let me know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”

So did Judas live in sin for a year before the first Palm Sunday. And now he is in Jerusalem with our Lord. The strength of his terrible passion was painfully disclosed at the supper at Bethany on the Saturday evening, when he made his angry, ill-mannered protest against St. Mary Magdalen’s lavish expenditure on his Master. It seems that this deed of love was the final impelling cause that drove Judas to his first desertion of our Lord, for *then* it was (as though the disappointment of the three hundred pence was too much for him to bear), as St. Matthew expressly says (xxvi, 14), that “he went to the chief priests, and discoursed with them, and said to them : ‘What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you.’ And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money.” Never had they imagined that in “one of the Twelve” they would find a ready and most useful agent for carrying out their design to slay our Lord. There and then they paid him thirty pieces of silver, and Judas “promised” to complete the work ! “And from that moment he sought opportunity to betray Him in the absence of the multitude.” Did our Lord speak too strongly when He said, “Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil ?”

And now the Last Supper has begun, and our Lord is with the Twelve. He has washed the feet of all, and He made that service of love a pretext for yet one further warning to Judas. "You are clean," He said at the end of the ceremony, "but not all. For He knew who he was that would betray Him; therefore He said, You are not all clean." Judas heard his Master's words, and knew that they applied to him, but "his heart was hardened." "And so, when Jesus had said those things, He was troubled in spirit, and He testified and said: 'I say to you, one of you that eateth with Me shall betray Me.' The disciples therefore looked upon one another, doubting of whom He spoke: and they began to be sorrowful and to say to Him, one by one, 'Is it I, Lord?' And they began to inquire among themselves which of them it was that should do this thing. But He answering, said: 'One of the twelve who dippeth with Me his hand in the dish, he shall betray Me. He that eateth bread with Me, shall lift up his heel against Me. Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table. The Son of Man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him, but woe to that man, by whom the Son of Man shall be betrayed: it were better for him, if that man had not been born.'"

How frequently did our Lord here harp on the word "betray." It was a feature of His sacred Passion that He had refrained from disclosing when He first gave a prediction of it. It seemed too painful, and only came to light in the later predictions. To betray a person implies a certain knowledge of him and intimacy with him, nay, a certain measure of trust and love; and thus to betray a friend means a violation of confidence. This it is that constitutes its malice and hideousness, and we rather say: "I will

close my friendship with such an one, but I will never betray him."

"Now there was leaning on Jesus's bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, and said to him, 'Who is it of whom He speaketh ?' He therefore leaning on the breast of Jesus, saith to Him, 'Lord, who is it ?' Jesus answered, 'He it is to whom I shall reach bread dipped.' And when he had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon."

"Then Judas, answering, said, 'Is it I, Rabbi ?' Jesus saith to him, 'Thou hast said it.' And after the morsel Satan entered into him. And Jesus said to him, 'That which thou dost, do quickly.' He therefore having received the morsel, went out immediately. And it was night."

We may ask who are they that betray our Lord ? They are first and foremost those who make bad confessions and sacrilegious Communions. This awful, this unnecessary sin is far more frequent than is commonly supposed. It takes our Lord and points Him out to the enemy, and hands Him over to them by the false kiss of peace. Let us pray for those who do these things, and make reparation for them. But there are less direct ways in which we may share the stain of Judas. The sin of Judas was one of malice, carried out for his own ends, regardless of consequences, in spite of many warnings. The fall of St. Peter was one of weakness, soon and perfectly repented of. We may gain here some light on the difference between formal and material evil. The world is full of evil, but it is not all of a formal kind, for it is done in great part by those "who know not what they do." But formal evil, sin committed with malice, with determination, calmly planned and deliberately executed, such sin is a betrayal, a

wholesale sacrifice of friendship. Our Lord looked on Peter, and brought him to tears ; our Lord washed the feet of Judas, and within a few hours he had betrayed his Master, and hung himself.

No matter what a man's spiritual advantages and lights may be, if even he live for years in a religious house, protected, encouraged, and helped in every way, our Lord can do nothing for him, unless he empty his heart of self, and fill it with the spirit of Jesus Christ. "What will you give me ?" will always be his cry. The besetting sin and chief weakness of a man always comes to the front. Judas did not ask for position, for honour, or for land : money was what he craved, and money he would have. The drunkard must have his drink, the miser his heap of coins.

"Even the man of my peace, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, hath greatly supplanted me" (Ps. xl), yea, "thou a man of one mind, my guide, and my familiar, who didst take sweet meats with me" (Ps. liv).

## CHAPTER XV

### THE THREE INTERRUPTIONS AT THE LAST SUPPER

WHEN Judas had received the morsel from our Lord, and went out of the room where the Last Supper was celebrated, our Lord at once began to speak to His disciples, and He spoke to them, so far as we know, at greater length and with more tenderness than on any previous occasion. We owe our knowledge of His long discourse entirely to St. John, and in his Gospel it occupies, together with our Lord's Prayer, rather more than four whole chapters. The departure of Judas had removed from that gathering of friends the one element of discord that had been present there, and now they "had but one heart and one soul." And our Lord said : "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him"—words that announce the Sacred Passion to be on the point of beginning, and enthrone it as the one means by which the work of our Lord on earth was to be consummated. And He added : "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house there are many mansions. If not, I would have told you, that I go to prepare a place for you. And if I shall go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you to Myself, that where I am, you also may be. And whither

I go you know, and the way you know." And here came the first interruption. "Thomas saith to Him : Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way ?" It was a remark perfectly in harmony with all we know of St. Thomas. Only one other sentence from his lips is recorded in the Gospels before the famous scene between himself and our Lord after the first Easter Day. It was spoken as our Lord was going to raise Lazarus to life. The journey to Bethany was fraught with danger, for "the Jews thought to stone our Lord" (St. John xi, 8), and St. Thomas, seeing his Master's determination to go, in spite of the danger, said : "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." At once we detect the same tone and ring in both sentences. Both are somewhat gloomy and pessimistic, the words of a man easily discouraged, wanting in confidence, one "of little faith." It was the same after the Resurrection. "Thomas was not with them when Jesus came." Depressed and discouraged at the events of Good Friday, he had gone off alone, and then, as we know, on his return, when told that the Lord had risen indeed and had been seen by many, he laid down the conditions on which alone he would make an act of faith in his risen Master. Similarly, in the Supper Room, he interrupted our Lord, for things looked black; there was mention of parting, and of our Lord's leaving them, yet He said so placidly : "whither I go you know, and the way you know." And Thomas saith to Him : "Lord we know not whither Thou goest : and how can we know the way ?"

Our Lord made answer : "I am the way, the truth, and the life," and then added : "No man cometh to the Father but by Me. If you had known Me, you would without doubt have known My Father also, and from henceforth you shall know Him, and you

have seen Him." "You have seen Him!" When did we see the Father they thought? It were joy indeed could we have but one sight of Him, but up till now we have not, though three of us heard His voice behind the cloud when the Master was transfigured on the mountain. And here came the second interruption. Philip saith to Him: "Lord show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Yes, there was the wish for a vision, for something exciting, and convincing, for something "face to face," not "through a glass in a dark manner." Then faith would be easy, and love and zeal would grow intense and warm.

But our Lord made answer: "So long a time have I been with you, and have you not known me? Philip, he that seeth Me, seeth the Father also. How sayest thou, show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you, I speak not of Myself. But the Father who abideth in Me, He doth the works. Believe you not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? Otherwise believe for the very works' sake. Amen, amen, I say to you, he that believeth in me, the works that I do, he also shall do: and greater than these shall he do. Because I go to the Father: and whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask any thing in My name, that I will do. If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you for ever. The spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him; but you shall know Him; because He shall abide with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more. But

you see Me, because I live, and you shall live. In that day you shall know, that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me. And he that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father : and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." And here came the third interruption "Judas saith to him, not the Iscariot : Lord, how is it, that Thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not to the world ?" That is the kind of question which our Lord never answered. It was an enquiry into the reasons of the workings of divine Providence, into the mysteriousness of the dispensations of grace, into the ways of God, into the times and seasons which the Father hath placed in His own power, and which not even the divine Son was to reveal. So our Lord merely replied : "If any one love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make Our abode with him. He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My words, and the word which you have heard, is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me," as though our Lord tacitly rebuked St. Jude for curiosity, and told him to look to himself, to obey his lights, and so to follow his Lord and Master.

Then our Lord added : "These things have I spoken to you, abiding with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. You have heard that I said to you : I go away, and I come unto you. If you loved Me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father : for the Father

is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass : that when it shall come to pass, you may believe. I will not now speak many things with you. For the prince of this world cometh, and in Me he hath not anything. But that the world may know that I love the Father : and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I. Arise, let us go hence."

These three interruptions give us matter for thought. In every hour of our lives we are at the Last Supper, and our Lord is there to feed and to comfort us, ever bidding us love one another, telling us to look upwards to our true home, to trust Him, and to work for Him, and with Him, to live by faith, and to feast on a peace all His own ; but we grow impatient, and we interrupt. There is first the interruption of discouragement. We are a little disappointed, and become slightly querulous, and say : "we don't know the way exactly ; we suppose it is the old road of the Cross, but we would like to be quite sure, and to know more clearly whither it is to lead." And our Lord's answer seems a little cold, and not sufficiently reassuring. He only says in reply : "I am the way, the truth, and the life." That must be enough. Is it always sufficient for us ?

And then a second interruption is made, very much in the spirit of those who would demand a sign from heaven. "Show us the Father," we say, "show us the heavens opened." Yes, a little more excitement, a stronger appeal to the senses, more show and brilliancy, would be welcome. Again our Lord's answer is a negative. "I will show you the Father, but only in the works of creation ; I will show you the Son, but only on the Cross ; I will show you the Holy Ghost in the inner workings of your heart and

conscience, in your inward peace or the reverse, according as you do good or evil."

Lastly, there comes the third interruption : "why dost Thou manifest Thyself to me, and not to all men ?" We know that God wills all men to be saved ; why are not all treated alike ? 'Why have I received all these lights, and the duties and obligations which these lights involve, while others have them not, and yet apparently may hope for a place in heaven on far easier terms than are granted to me ? My neighbour may do many things which are forbidden to me. God has been too good to me, and I could wish He had not done so much.' You do not really wish this, but this train of thought may come, and does come. It is ungenerous : let us have none of it. To whom much has been given, from him much shall be required. It is the work of Reparation that faces us here in all its beauty, as our great privilege, repeating the first word on the Cross : "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And our Lord answered St. Jude in this spirit : "if any man love Me," He said, "He will keep My word," thus making our own personal love of our Lord, our own conviction of what He has been to us, and done for us, the basis of our service, the instrument of our perfection, and the spur to our perseverance. "I do not know what our Lord has been to others, I only know what He has been to me." Thus does our Lord in His answers to the three interruptions suggest to us the temper and attitude of mind most welcome to Him, namely, that of a trusting friend, of an obedient child, of a loyal fellow-worker, and gives us a general answer to all our interruptions in these words : "These things I have spoken to you, that you may have peace." Leave disquieting questions : use the lights vouchsafed to you : journey day by day in the

path assigned to you : "what I do, you know not now, but you shall know hereafter" : live by faith and walk in love : and at the last, "when the morning is come, Jesus stands on the shore."

## CHAPTER XVI

### OUR LORD'S FAREWELL TO HIS OWN

OUR LORD closed His answer to St. Jude at the Last Supper by saying : "Arise, let us go hence," and these words have puzzled commentators on Scripture, because at once our Lord proceeded to give an address of considerable length to His disciples, and apparently in the very place where He had washed their feet. This, however, may well be explained by supposing that at that moment our Lord rose from the table at which He had eaten the Paschal Lamb with His disciples, and went to another part of "the large and furnished dining-room," where there were gathered together our Lady and the holy women, and that then He instituted the Blessed Sacrament, and communicated them all with His own hands.

"With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer," our Lord had said at the very opening of this great meeting ; already He had given them a fresh and striking indication of His love for them, and of His mind towards them, by washing their feet ; then He had been obliged to announce the fact that soon He would be betrayed by one of them, and even to disclose who that one was ; but now all trace of discord has gone from the meeting, and the three years of close friendship are

to be crowned by an address of love and a Gift of union without parallel in any other part of our Lord's life—Union with Himself is the main topic of the address : “I am the true vine” ; He said, “and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me, that beareth not fruit, He will take away : and every one that beareth fruit He will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now you are clean by reason of the word, which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine ; you the branches : he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit ; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone abide not in Me, he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire, and he burneth. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask whatsoever you will and it shall be done unto you. In this is My Father glorified ; that you bring forth very much fruit, and become My disciples. As the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you. Abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love ; as I also have kept My Father's commandments, and do abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and your joy may be filled. This is My commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do the things that I command you. I will not now call you servants : for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth. But I have called you friends : because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you. You have not chosen Me :

but I have chosen you, and have appointed you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit ; and your fruit should remain : that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you. These things I command you, that you love one another. If the world hate you, know ye, that it hath hated Me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own : but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember My word that I said to you : The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you : if they have kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake : because they know not Him that sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin ; but now they have no excuse for their sin. He that hateth Me, hateth My Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin ; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father. But that the word may be fulfilled which is written in their law : They hated Me without cause. But when the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me. And you shall give testimony, because you are with Me from the beginning. These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized. They will put you out of the synagogues ; yea, the hour cometh when whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God. And these things will they do to you ; because they have not known the Father, nor Me. But these things I have told you, that when the hour shall come, you may remember that I told you."

Thus does our Lord prepare His own for their first Communion. Every point is touched upon. We must be united with Him, "the one Mediator, ever living to make intercession for us," else all we do is without fruit. "Without Him we can do nothing," but yet our lives are to be most fruitful, not barren of result, and for this we must be our Lord's disciples, and friends indeed, and we must be bound to our neighbour by the law of charity. Persecutions and trials of no small number and magnitude will be our portion in the world : we shall be hated by many, nay, the hour will comewhen whosoever killeth uswill consider that he doeth a service to God ; nevertheless we are to continue to the end, "giving testimony" to our Lord, and never "being scandalised" in His regard. The demand is a great one, and "for these things who is sufficient?" Has our Lord provided us with adequate support for such a task ? No, not yet ; one of His gracious promises is still unfulfilled ; it was made a year ago, it has figured in Prophecy for centuries, and when our Lord promised it should be given, He coupled its bestowal with the assurance that it would give "life" to our souls, nay, that without it we should "have no life" in us. His hour has come and "with desire" He avails Himself of it. "Draw near to Him and be enlightened ; taste and see that the Lord is sweet ; labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting ; take this Gift from God wherewith to overthrow thy adversaries ; for blessed is he that shall eat Bread in the kingdom of God."

"Come eat My Bread, and drink the Wine which I have mingled for you." And Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to His disciples, and said : "Take ye and eat. This is My body." And taking the chalice, Hegave thanks, and gave to them,

saying : “Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins. And I say to you, I will not drink from henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I shall drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father. Do this for a commemoration of Me.”

So has our Lord “inebriated the weary soul, and filled every hungry soul” ; His friends are fed with the Food of Angels, He has given them Bread from Heaven prepared without labour, and having in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste. This is the good thing of Him, this is His beautiful thing, the Corn of the Elect, and the Wine springing forth Virgins.” In the strength of that Food they may go forth to witness to Christ until the end, heedless of danger and opposition : in the strength of that Food they can walk to the mount of God. “Though they should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, they need fear no evils, for He is with them.” He will not leave them orphans, He finds His delights in being among the children of men, He is with us all days even to the consummation of the world.

The first Mass has been said by our Great High Priest : the first Communion of the friends of our Lord has been made, and eleven of them have been ordained priests, so that “from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof there may be in every place sacrifice.” Our Lord’s work is now accomplished, and He turns the mind of His own to the immediate future. “And now I go to Him that sent Me,” He said, “and none of you asketh Me : whither goest thou ? But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth : it is expedient for you that I go : for

if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you ; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And when He is come, He will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believed not in Me ; and of justice, because I go to the Father, and you shall see Me no longer ; and of judgment, because the prince of this world is already judged. I have yet many things to say to you : but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth. For He shall not speak of Himself ; but what things soever He shall hear, He shall speak ; and the things that are to come, He shall show you. He shall glorify Me ; because He shall receive of mine, and shall show it to you. All things whatsoever the Father hath, are Mine. Therefore I said, that He shall receive of mine, and show it to you. A little while, and now you shall not see Me ; and again a little while, and you shall see Me ; because I go to the Father. Then some of His disciples said one to another : What is this that He saith to us : A little while, and you shall not see Me ; and again a little while, and you shall see Me, and because I go to the Father ? They said therefore : What is this that He saith, A little while ? we know not what He speaketh. And Jesus knew that they had a mind to ask Him ; and He said to them : Of this do you inquire among yourselves, because I said : A little while, and you shall not see Me, and again a little while, and you shall see Me ? Amen, amen I say to you that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice ; and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labour, hath sorrow, because her hour is come ; but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man

is born into the world. So also you now indeed have sorrow ; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice ; and your joy no man shall take from you. And in that day you shall not ask Me any thing. Amen, amen I say to you : if you ask the Father any thing in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto you have not asked any thing in My name. Ask, and you shall receive ; that your joy may be full. These things I have spoken to you in proverbs. The hour cometh, when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father. In that day you shall ask in My name ; and I say not to you, that I will ask the Father for you : for the Father Himself loveth you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world ; again I leave the world, and I go to the Father. His disciples say to him : Behold, now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now we know that thou knowest all things, and Thou needest not that any man should ask Thee. By this we believe that Thou camest forth from God. Jesus answered them : Do you now believe ? Behold the hour cometh, and it is now come, that you shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone : and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you shall have distress ; but have confidence, I have overcome the world.

## CHAPTER XVII

### OUR LORD'S LAST PRAYER FOR HIS OWN

"THESE things Jesus spoke, and lifting up His eyes to heaven He said : 'Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee. As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He may give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him. Now this is eternal life : that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was with Thee. I have manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou hast given Me out of the world. Thine they were, and to Me Thou gavest them ; and they have kept Thy word. Now they have known that all things which Thou hast given Me are from Thee, because the words which Thou gavest Me, I have given to them ; and they have received them, and have known in very deed that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me. I pray for them ; I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me, because they are Thine, and all My things are Thine, and Thine are Mine ; and I am glorified in them. And now I am not in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name

whom Thou hast given Me ; that they may be one, as We also are. While I was with them, I kept them in Thy name. Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept ; and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture may be fulfilled. And now I come to Thee ; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy filled in themselves. I have given them Thy word, and the world hath hated them because they are not of the world ; as I also am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil. They are not of the world, as I also am not of the world. Sanctify them in truth. Thy word is truth. As thou hast sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for them do I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me ; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father in Me, and I in Thee ; that they also may be one in Us ; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them : that they may be one, as We also are one. I in them and Thou in Me ; that they may be perfect in one, and the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast also loved Me. Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me, may be with Me ; that they may see My glory which thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world. Just Father, the world hath not known Thee ; but I have known Thee ; and these have known that Thou hast sent Me. And I have made known Thy name to them, and will make it known ; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me, may be in them, and I in them.”

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

"WHEN Jesus had said these things, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where there was a garden into which He entered with His disciples." The Last Supper had concluded by their singing together a hymn, the usual Psalms of thanksgiving after the Paschal meal, and then "according to His custom" our Lord "went forth to the Mount of Olives," whither He had "often resorted together with His disciples."

"And it was night." Already there is a change in our Lord, in His manner, in His tone of speech. "Fear has seized upon Him, and a trembling, and all His bones are affrighted." At the Last Supper He had been the support, the comfort and joy of all who were present. He was wiping away the tears from their eyes, and saying : "let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid." But now, "His heart is troubled within Him, and the fear of death is fallen upon Him," and on the way to Mount Olivet, He speaks words of most solemn warning to His own, the like of which He had never used before. "You will all be scandalised in Me this night," He said, "for it is written, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be dispersed. But after I

shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.''' As on previous occasions, our Lord crowned this prediction of His Passion and of the effect it would have on His followers by a reference to the glory of His Resurrection—but it was the earlier portion of His words that went home to the minds of those who heard Him, and crushed their spirit. More than once that evening, St. Peter had spoken impetuously about what he was prepared to do and endure for his Master ; to prison and to death with his Master would he go, before ever they should be parted from one another ; and more than once that evening our Lord had rebuked him for his excessive self-confidence. But now that awful word "scandalised" had wounded his warm love ; at least that could never be ; no man ever felt more deeply that our Lord had "done all things well"—how, then, could he take scandal at any word or deed of His ? So he quickly said : "Though all men shall be scandalised in Thee, I will never be scandalised." And Jesus said to him : "Amen, I say to thee, to-day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice. But Peter spoke the more vehemently : Although I should die together with Thee I will not deny Thee. And in like manner said all the disciples."

They entered the garden together, and the change which had come over our Lord became more marked at every moment. The disciples had noticed a change at the last Supper, when our Lord had been obliged to announce the fact that the betrayer was with Him at table. It is much the same now. At once He gave a general direction to all : "Pray, lest ye enter into temptation," and He added : "Sit you here, till I go yonder and pray." And so He left eight of them, "and taking with Him Peter, and

James, and John, He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad, to fear and to be heavy. Then He saith to them : My soul is sorrowful even unto death, stay you here, and watch with Me." So the agony of our Lord in the garden began. It is a scene that stands apart from all the rest of the Sacred Passion, while it is also a compendium of the whole. It is our Lord Himself, with full deliberation, plunging into the waters of that baptism with which He had to be baptised. Its waters came in even unto His soul. "He came into the depth of the sea," for He was to allow something to touch Him which had never touched Him before, from which only those waters in their flood and bitterness could make Him once more the Son of the Eternal Father, in whom that Father was well pleased. It is the whole Passion in its every detail. For the first time in His earthly sojourn, our Lord leans for support on others ; He seems to need them, and to be unable to help them in turn. "Watch with Me, don't leave Me," He says to His own. "I know you are weary, and your eyes are swollen with weeping, and half-closed in sleep ; yet, the hour of My enemy has begun, and soon he will be here. Stay you here, and watch with Me." Brave sufferers are wont to conceal their pain, and refuse to speak of it ; or if they speak they make light of it, and say it is quite bearable. We never know the half of what they endure, and their patience and cheerfulness edify us. Indeed our Lord was one of these ; He never had been free from pain, and all had been borne in silence. But now there is a change, for an awful spectre is nigh to terrify Him, and seize Him, and He cannot face it alone, and so He "looks for one to comfort Him." "He began to be sorrowful, and to be sad, to fear, and to be heavy." It is all a mystery, which none can fathom, as is the

cry of desolation at the ninth hour on Calvary ; but, like all mysteries of faith, it profits us to seek to penetrate it. "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquities of us all"—yes—"of us all." The waters of sin, as in a mighty wave, have come in even unto His soul.

But a few days ago our Lord, standing in the sacred Temple, the holiest spot on earth, had faced the world of sinners with the question : "which of you shall convict me of sin ?" (St. John viii, 46). No words more bold could fall from human lips, nor could they be used at all, if there were the least possibility of such a conviction. Our Lord is the Lamb of God, Who taketh away sin ; the Father is well pleased with Him ; He did no sin ; no guile was found in His mouth ; but now, in this awful hour, He can ask no such question. He has no boldness, but quakes with fear, and groans with sorrow, and appeals for help, for He cannot bear to be alone. He holds out hands for some friends to support Him, for "something has touched Him, and no virtue has gone forth from Him." He seems powerless beneath the grip of the fiend that assails Him, so tight and cruel is it. He can give sight to the blind, and health to the infirm, He can raise the dead to life, He can forgive sins in others, He cannot forgive them in Himself. He saves others, Himself He cannot save ! His guilt is too great ! He has "become sin !" Therefore is His sorrow become perpetual ; His wound is desperate, so as to refuse to be healed ; it has become as the falsehood of deceitful waters, that cannot be trusted. "Woe is Me, My mother, why hast thou borne Me a man of strife, a man of contention to all the earth ?"

So our Lord went forward a little, and withdrew from His disciples a stone's cast, and He fell upon His face, flat on the ground, and kneeling down, He

prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass from Him, saying : "O My Father, all things are possible to Thee, if it is possible, take away this chalice from Me, nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt." It was this leprosy of sin, this sense of defilement, as though a change had come over the unchangeable God, as though He were guilty of a million transgressions, that made our Lord then acquainted with grief, and bowed Him to the earth, and caused the blood to flow, while He prayed : "My Father, if it be possible let this chalice pass from Me. They are multiplied above the hairs of My head who hate Me without cause. My enemies are grown strong ; turn not away Thy face. I am in trouble, hear Me speedily, for Thou knowest My reproach, and My confusion, and My shame. The troubles of My heart are multiplied, for there is a friend that is a friend only in name ; is not this a grief unto death ? Remember that I stand in Thy sight to speak good for them, and to turn away Thy indignation from them. Yet, what utility is there in My blood ?"

At length our Lord rose from His prayer, and came to His disciples, but "He found them sleeping for sorrow, for their eyes were heavy." Never before had our Lord so strongly marked the sense of surprise as now. "Simon, sleepest thou ?" He said to St. Peter. There is gentle irony in the words. At least from one who says he is ready to go to prison and to death with his friend, it might be expected that he could and would at least make some effort to watch with him, when bidden to do so. "Simon, sleepest thou ? Couldst thou not watch one hour with Me ? Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

"And going away again the second time, He prayed

saying : "O My Father, if this chalice cannot pass away except I drink it, Thy will be done." And when He returned, He found them again asleep, and they knew not what to answer Him. And leaving them, He went away again, and He prayed the third time, saying the same words. And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And, being in an agony, He prayed the longer. And His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground." And all this was endured alone. "I looked for one to comfort Me, and found none. Woe is Me, My mother ; why hast thou borne Me a man of strife and of contention to all the earth ? Why am I a sign to be contradicted ? They have laid in wait against Me, and they have prevailed, and there was none to help. They have rushed in upon Me as when a wall is broken, and a gate opened. I am brought to nothing, and My prosperity hath passed away like a cloud."

So did our Lord plunge into His agony, crushed with the awful sense of failure, that in spite of His sufferings many would be lost ; crushed too with the load of sin of every kind that then weighed upon Him, "enduring His whole Passion in every moment of it," and finding His strength only in continued prayer, all in submission to His Father's Will. "Behold O Lord, my affliction because my enemy is lifted up. I am grieved in my exercise, and am troubled at the voice of the enemy, and at the tribulation of the sinner. What profit is there in my Blood, while I go down to corruption ?"

It is necessary that the world be convinced by the Passion of our Lord of sin, of justice, and of judgment. A right sense of sin must needs be aroused in the hearts of men, and the Agony of our Lord in the Garden is the measure of the importance and

price of that lesson. Only when it is learnt, can men profit by the merits of our Lord, and “walk in love, as most dear children,” clean of heart, children of obedience, good stewards of the manifold grace of God. “Know ye now that it is an evil and bitter thing to leave the Lord thy God, for your iniquities divide between you and your God, and your sins withhold good things from you. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, so as to obey the lusts thereof. Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord, or who shall stand in His Holy Place? The innocent in hands, and clean of heart, who hath not taken his soul in vain, nor sworn deceitfully to his neighbour.”

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE BETRAYAL OF OUR LORD

IT is much to be noted that in the earlier predictions of His sacred Passion, our Lord made no mention of the fact that He would be betrayed into the hands of those who for long were "devising to put Him to death." This detail is conspicuous by its absence, and it would seem as though our Lord held it in special abhorrence, and could not bring Himself (if we may so speak) to reveal it. It was enough and to spare that He was to "suffer many things," and "to be put to death." What those "many things" were, our Lord disclosed gradually in future predictions. In the second prediction, for example, He said that He would be "delivered" into the hands of men—a word that implies some treachery or underhand dealing (St. Mark ix, 30), but it was only in the third prediction that the painful detail itself was definitely announced, and that was on the very eve of the Passion. "Behold," said our Lord to the Twelve, "we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests." (St. Mark x, 33.) It was a new light on what was to come, and the word must have deeply pained the disciples to whom it was spoken. Even now a full disclosure has not been made ; it is still left doubtful

as to whether this is to be the work of one or of many, and certainly not the least indication has been given that it will be the work of "one of the Twelve." Probably a section of the Pharisees will make it their business to "betray" one whom they so persecute—though it should be borne in mind that the very word "betray" implies a certain degree of friendship and intimacy between those concerned. Only "a friend and a familiar" can betray another. It is the cruel, heartless breakage of a bond of trust and love, that aggravates the heinousness of the deed, and gives it its essential malice.

During the closing days of our Lord's life, Judas showed very clearly the depth of his ill-feeling against our Lord. At the supper at Bethany, he protested rudely and angrily against St. Mary Magdalen's deed of love. Everything our Lord did or said was wrong and faulty in his eyes. Meanwhile, the purpose not merely of killing our Lord, but also of getting Him into their power by some plot or artifice was uppermost in the minds of His enemies. They "feared the people," for they knew His influence with them ; the congested state of Jerusalem at the time of the Great Sabbath-Day made it in every way advisable for the capture of our Lord to be effected as quietly as possible, otherwise there would be "a tumult among the people." So "the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might *by some wile* lay hold on Him, and kill Him." All this chimed in well with the poisoned mind of Judas. He was one of our Lord's intimate friends ; he knew our Lord's habits and places of resort ; he wanted money, and probably these priests would pay anyone at least a fair wage who would help them in achieving the object of their desires,

Why not at least approach them, and make them an offer, and ascertain their wishes quite accurately ? The vexation of the “waste of more than three hundred pence” by St. Mary Magdalen was more than Judas could endure, and, as St. Matthew is careful to tell us, “Judas *then* went to the chief priests and magistrates, and *discussed* with them *how* he might betray Him to them.” Did Judas face the fact that it was *betrayal* of his Master and Friend ? Probably he tried, as we all do, to make out “a case” for himself, so as not to be guilty in his own eyes of such a crime ; but betrayal it was, and Judas practically acknowledged it to be so in his words : “What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you ?” There is an easy confidence in the words, as though Judas felt quite sure of success, and were fully determined to carry the project through. “There will be no difficulty in the matter, I know my Master well.” And the chief priests regarded it doubtless in the same light. At once they saw the object of their search in their hands : no more rapid or reliable means of carrying out their purpose could have been offered to them. “Hearing it they were glad, and they covenanted to give him money. And Judas promised. And, (from that moment) he sought opportunity how he might conveniently betray Him, in the absence of the multitude.” In every detail the compact is agreeable to those who made it. Judas only wanted money, and money was ready for him there and then ; the Jews only wanted our Lord, but they wanted Him “quietly,” without disturbance, and this, too, could be accomplished by reason of Judas’s intimate acquaintance with our Lord.

Then, at the Last Supper, at the last possible moment, the final disclosure was made by our Lord,

and it is made "openly," in the presence of him whom it concerns, in the presence of his close associates, as though with a hope that they might prevail upon him never to stain his life with such a crime. "Jesus was very much troubled in the spirit, and He testified, and said : "Amen, amen, I say to you, one of you that eateth with Me shall betray Me. One of the twelve who dippeth with Me his hand in the dish. And the Son of Man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man shall be betrayed. It were better for him, if that man had not been born. And Judas, having received the morsel, went out immediately. And it was night." He can have lost no time in carrying out his design. "What thou dost, do quickly," our Lord had said to him, as His last word, after telling him that he was about to betray Him. So to "the chief priests and ancients of the people" he must have gone, and told them they could easily capture our Lord that very night at "the farm called Gethsemane." "I know the place well," he would say, "for often have I been there with the One you seek." It is quickly agreed : "a band of men and servants from the chief priests and the Pharisees and the ancients," a great multitude in all, are soon furnished with swords and clubs, with lanterns and torches, and proceed to the Garden of Olives. What preparations to capture One who shall be "as a lamb led to the slaughter, not opening his mouth !"

Probably quite a hundred soldiers from the Temple-guard were also taken, and of these Judas constituted himself the leader (Acts i, 16). And to make doubly sure that the right person should be captured, Judas had given them a sign, saying : "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He, lay hold on

Him, and lead him away cautiously." These words reveal the intimate knowledge of our Lord possessed by Judas, and the intensity of his hatred of Him. "Lead him away cautiously!" Are such words necessary? They form no part of the compact between Judas and the Jews. His work is finished by the betrayal. Why add words that point to our Lord as one that "stirreth up the people"? But Judas more than once had seen our Lord make His escape from His enemies. At Nazareth they had "thrust Him out of the city, and brought Him to the brow of the hill, whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong; but He, passing through the midst of them, went His way (St. Luke iv, 29-30.) In Jerusalem but a few days previously, the Jews "had taken up stones to cast at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple" (St. John viii, 59). Would something of this kind happen now, in spite of all precautions? It might be so; therefore, said Judas, "hold Him *fast*, and lead Him away *cautiously*, or He may escape you."

And now they have reached the Garden of Olives, and our Lord, after His agony and protracted prayer, warns His own of the approach of danger. "The hour is come," He said, "behold, the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go, behold he that will betray Me is at hand." While He was yet speaking, Judas arrived, and *immediately* drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. And going up to Him, he said: "Hail, Rabbi," and he kissed Him—and he kissed Him with much show of affection.

And Jesus said to him: "Friend, whereunto art thou come? Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" But Judas was silent, and "knew not what to answer Him."

"My enemies have chased Me, and caught Me like a bird without cause. One that imagineth evil against the Lord, contriving treachery in his mind, hath come forth against Me ; he is a friend that is a friend only in name, and is not this a grief unto death ? With his mouth he speaketh peace with his friend, but secretly he lieth in wait for him. Many have been brought to fall for gold, and the beauty thereof hath been their ruin. If my enemy had reviled Me, I would willingly have borne with it ; and if he that hated Me had spoken great things against Me, I would perhaps have hidden Myself from him ; but thou, My guide and My familiar, who didst eat sweet-meats together with Me in the house of God . . . Friend Judas, whereunto art thou come? Dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss ?"

But our Lord was "offered up because He willed it" ; there shall be no capture of Him ; He will hand Himself over to the powers of darkness, seeing that "their hour had come !" He could "pass through their midst," did He so choose, but He says : "Behold I come ; in the head of the book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will, O God."

"Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said to them : 'Whom seek ye ?' They answered Him : 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus saith to them : 'I am He.' And Judas also, who betrayed Him, stood with them. As soon therefore as He had said to them : 'I am He,' they went backward, and fell to the ground. Again therefore He asked them : 'Whom seek ye ?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus answered, 'I have told you that I am He. If therefore you seek Me, let these go their way. That the word might be fulfilled which He said : Of them whom thou hast given Me, I have not lost any one.' "

"And Judas also, who betrayed Him, stood with *them*"—not with the Eleven. He has broken from his old friends for ever, and now he sees his new associates "fall to the ground," awe-struck in some mysterious way by the majesty of One whom he has known so long, but whom now he despises and has betrayed with a kiss ! A hundred and more of them are there, felled to the ground. "What will He do when He cometh to judge, who did this when giving Himself up to be judged ? What will be His power when He cometh to reign, Who had this power when He came to die ?" (St. Augustine). The prostrate soldiers, flat on the ground, are surely a grace for Judas. He knows why they are there ; he knows Who it is that has spoken to them ; "let him turn to his Lord, and his Lord will turn to him." Moreover, when he heard our Lord speak those words of love and of consideration for others—"let these go their way"—as though our Lord said : "Do with Me what you please, but you shall not lay hands on My own," did not Judas recognise the same Master who in happy days gone by had drawn the little children to His side, and comforted the mourners, and said : "Come to Me all ye that are heavy laden, and I will refresh you" ? But no : "Satan had entered into Judas," and "his last state had become worse than the first." "The riches of God's goodness, and patience, and long-suffering are despised ; the benignity of God cannot lead him to penance, but according to his hardness and impenitent heart, he treasures up to himself wrath, against the day of wrath and revelation of the just judgment of God" (Rom. ii, 45).

Nor must we lose sight of the very last words now spoken by our Lord : "of those whom Thou hast given Me, I have not lost any one,"—and of the effect

they must have had on Judas. Surely they are a great grace and final invitation to him, if he will but hearken to their sweetness. But now Judas "has no hopes : he will go after his own thoughts, and will do according to the perverseness of his evil heart" (Jer. xviii, 12). "The fine gold is become dim, the finest colour is changed : the crown is fallen from his head, the joy of his heart is ceased." No longer can he "feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth," for this is the joy of the friends of our Lord, "the testimony of their conscience, that in simplicity of heart and sincerity of God they have conversed in this world, blameless and sincere children of God, without reproof, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom they shine as lights in the world."

## CHAPTER XX

### ST. PETER CUTS OFF THE EAR OF MALCHUS

THIS incident in the Sacred Passion is recorded by all the four Evangelists, each of the sacred writers supplying some special detail. It may be said to have begun at the Last Supper, when, towards the end of that scene, our Lord warned His Apostles that the hour of danger was close at hand, and that in that very night the Shepherd would be struck and the sheep of the flock dispersed and scandalized. He told them to watch and to pray, and He added, that though in times gone by they had never needed anything, even when sent without purse, or scrip, or shoes, now "he that had a purse should take it, and likewise a scrip, and he that had not should sell his coat and buy a sword" (St. Luke xxii, 36). All this was, of course, the language of figure, but the Apostles took their Master quite literally, with that dullness of comprehension which had been theirs throughout the three years.

Now it was quite customary for pilgrims from Galilee to arm themselves with a sword on journeying southward to Judaea, for the journey was full of danger from robbers and bandits, and frequently they had to pass through the unfriendly province of Samaria. This may explain the answer of the Apostles

to our Lord. "Behold, Lord," they said, with evident satisfaction, "here are two swords"—not one, but two—but our Lord, seeing they had not understood His words aright, waived the subject, and merely said : "It is enough," and went forth to the Garden of Olives, there to begin His agony. St. Peter, however, with characteristic warmth of feeling, and also perhaps by reason of his recent boast that he would go with his Master to prison and even to death, as if to be on the safe side, was careful to cling to his sword, and thus armed, followed our Lord to the Garden.

The Agony is now over, and Judas has arrived, accompanied by many ; a mock kiss of friendship has served in the darkness to mark the object of their search ; "and they came up and laid hands on Jesus, and held Him !" Our Lord, quickly surrounded by overwhelming numbers, is quite defenceless. The Apostles saw this, and at once felt called upon to strike a blow in His defence. So "they that were about Jesus, seeing what would follow, said to Him : 'Lord, shall we strike with the sword ?'" But St. Peter could brook no delay, nor wait for any instructions, nor listen for the answer to such a question. He cannot stand by, and consent to his Master's death or ill-treatment. Had he prayed, as he had been told to do, he might have acted more prudently : he might have spoken, and expostulated at any rate at first ; but now without reflection, his hand at once made for the sword or knife which he had in his robe, and stretching forth his hand, he drew it from its scabbard, and "struck the servant of the high-priest, and cut off his right ear. And the name of the servant was Malchus." It was an act of zeal blindly done, and done in the dark, with no light or guidance and like all such acts it failed, and would have led to serious consequences

had not our Lord interposed, and healed the wound, and so pacified the angry bystanders. "Suffer ye thus far," our Lord said, making His way to the wounded man, lying on the ground in a pool of blood—that is—"let Me at least come up to him, for I would bind up his wound." And when He had touched his ear, He healed him. Then our Lord turned to St. Peter, and said to him : "Put up again thy sword into its place. For all that take the sword shall perish with the sword." And he added : "Thinkest thou that I cannot ask My Father, and He will give Me at once more than twelve legions of angels ?" It is as though our Lord had said : "I have but to ask, and the whole court of Heaven is at hand to fight My battle : Judas has tried to make sure of his prize by bringing a company of soldiers to entrap and arrest Me, but what are they against the twelve legions and more of Angels that I could command at a moment's notice ? But My kingdom is not of this world : it will not be propagated by swords and the forces of this world ; it cometh not with observation ; it will grow through pain ; My blood and the sufferings of My friends are its seed, and the harvest will be great. Put up therefore, Peter, thy sword into its scabbard, for all who take the sword, shall perish by the sword."

In all our work for God, we must act prudently, and under obedience, with no desire for show or self-distinction, carefully guarding against ill-guided zeal, so that when we strike a blow for the Lord it shall be well-directed, and not at random, not inflicting an ugly wound, which the mercy and power of God may quickly heal, but one that shall give glory to God in the highest, and promote peace on earth among men of goodwill. Often indeed we are tempted to use our sword against our Lord, not on His behalf, as

Peter did. What sword is this? It is the sword of self-love, and self-defence—a sword we are careful ever to carry about with us, one we are ever ready to draw.

When we fall into sin, how prone are we to say to ourselves: “I have fallen again, and broken my resolutions; it seems as though I cannot help it; I hope to put it all right at my next confession, but till then things may go anyhow.” So the sword of self-defence is drawn, and our Lord is told to keep away till some days at least have passed by, and then His forgiveness may be sought. Put up that sword into its scabbard, for they that take it shall perish by it. “Turn to the Lord, and forsake thy sins: delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He is bountiful to forgive.” Again, in seasons of trial or some want of success, or when, after great labour, success has actually been ours, but no one has spoken a word of praise or encouragement, we have laid up abundant treasure in the eyes of a Father who seeth in secret, and we really know that such is the case, but we become restless and dissatisfied, and our hand goes to the hilt of that sword of self-love ever at our side, and we draw the sword, and say: “God is hard on me here, and I will in turn be reserved with Him.” Such a mood and ungenerous resolve may not last long, but it may easily prove the beginning of a downfall. It is a time of great danger, and so “put up that sword quickly into its scabbard, for they that take the sword, shall perish by it.” Or perchance we have asked for light and direction on a particular point, and we have received the true answer, but it does not satisfy: at once the sword of self-defence is drawn,

and we say : "I am sure the matter was not looked at properly ; if all were known, the decision would have been very different," and the sword is drawn, with the loss of peace and joy, and an inward friction and restlessness take their place, that spoil all good effort and many a prayer. Put up that sword into its scabbard, for they that take the sword, shall perish by the sword.

There is assuredly a tendency within each of us to draw this sword of self-love and self-defence in regard to at least one point connected with our lives. There is for all some corner into which our Lord may not enter, where He shall not be King, and we draw the sword to keep Him from that meadow at least. We argue with God, we are ungenerous to Him, we dictate terms to Him, we haggle, we weigh, and we measure our service to Him. Put up that sword into its scabbard, for they that take the sword shall perish by the sword. And in our relations with our neighbour, how often is the sweet bond of charity severed by this sharp sword, so readily drawn, so clumsily and often so cruelly used, so rarely allowed to rest in its scabbard ! Something has been said to annoy us, and we have heard it, and taken it amiss ; the word is allowed to simmer in the mind and heart, making all acid and bitter, and the sword is drawn, and we are but watching the time when we may be "revenged of our adversary." Yet all the time we are saying "Our Father," and begging to be forgiven, even forsooth as we forgive others ! Put up that sword into its scabbard, for they that take the sword shall perish by the sword.

These swords, so quickly drawn, so slowly put away, so sharp, so destructive, are among the things that are for our loss and ruin. Let us trust God

more, for He will avenge and repay ; He can send legions of Angels to clear the cockle from the wheat, and will do so in His good time : meanwhile let us wait and possess our souls in patience, suffering all to grow together until the harvest, walking ever in the spirit of our Lord, who in His hour of need thought not of Himself, but healed the wounds of His enemies, and bids us love one another as He has loved us, careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. "This is the declaration which we have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another" (1 St. John iii, 11).

## CHAPTER XXI

### OUR LORD WITH HIS ACCUSERS AT GETHSEMANE

IT is beautifully clear from the sacred narrative that the miracle worked by our Lord on the ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest, after it had been cut off by the sword of St. Peter, caused a deep sensation and a considerable pause in the proceedings. All were amazed at what had been done, and no one could speak or move for astonishment. Little had Malchus expected such an adventure when he left Jerusalem that evening ; it was surely to be a bloodless contest, and an easy arrest, but he was mistaken, and soon he had found himself on the ground, in awful pain, his blood flowing freely, and his right ear on the ground beside him. But our Lord's deed of mercy and power quickly changed the whole situation. We can picture the soldiers crowding around their wounded companion, trying to see if the ear were really healed or no, asking him if he could hear with it aright, and congratulating him on his good fortune. "We never saw the like," they would exclaim. More than once, at our Lord's approach to them that evening, they had "gone backward, and fallen to the ground," overawed in some mysterious way by His majesty, but now another marvel holds them fast, for divine mercy and power have made

themselves felt. The priests and magistrates of the temple and the ancients are surely ashamed, and stung to the quick by what has taken place. Judas, too, is close at hand ; is he happy now, and proud of what he has achieved ? are the thirty pieces of silver a comfort to him now ? does he associate himself with the Eleven whom he has known so long ?

It is our Lord's opportunity, and He will use it fully. He alone is calm, while all around are agitated and confused, and He turned to the chief priests, and magistrates of the temple, and the ancients that were come to Him, and said : "Are you (really) come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs, to apprehend Me ? You, men of education, you, the priests of the Lord, whose care should be for justice and charity ! I could have believed it of these soldiers, but not of you. Is it possible you can have thought such precautions necessary ? I have always spoken openly, and in secret I have spoken nothing." Our Lord could have made His own the words of St. Paul to the elders at Miletus (Acts xx, 18-34) : "You know from the first day that I came into Jerusalem, in what manner I have been with you all the time, serving My Father with all humility, and with tears, and temptation which befell me by the conspiracies of the Jews. I have kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but have preached it to you, and taught you publicly, and from house to house. But now behold I know that all of you, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. I am clear from the blood of all ; I have not been wanting to declare to you all the counsel of God. Keep in memory that for three years I have not ceased, night and day, with tears to admonish every one of you. I have not coveted any

man's silver, gold, or apparel, as you yourselves know ; for such things as were necessary for me, these hands have furnished ; in the face of all this, is it possible that you have come out as it were against a robber, with swords and clubs ? Remember that I have been daily with you in the temple ; remember that I have twice with a scourge of cords cleansed the courts of that house of My Father in broad daylight; making it a house of prayer instead of a den of thieves. Why did you not seize Me then ? Why were you afraid of Me then ? Why did you not stretch forth your hands against Me then ? You were afraid, lest the people would have stoned you. But now, under the cover of darkness, when men are asleep, protected, too, by numbers of soldiers, and even using one of My own disciples to guide you to the place to which he well knew I had gone, you have ventured out against Me, as against a robber, with swords and clubs. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness. I am ready for stripes ; I am ready, and I am not perturbed."

How history repeats itself, for it is precisely as against a robber that the world has ever gone out against our Lord. Its prime charge against Him is that He asks so much, and will have what He demands. He steals our will, our liberty, our individuality; in the sacrifices that He claims at our hands, He includes our friends, our dearest possessions, and what we cling to most fondly. As a robber, He even invades our homes, and carries off what is most precious there to be His chosen friends. His Church is ever busy amassing a fortune of souls, laying up treasure for eternity. The world is all for the present, but our Lord works for the future, and so against Him the world goes out, darkly and craftily, with swords and clubs, as against a thief.

Is this ever also true of those who profess to know and love Him ? Can our Lord speak to them as He spoke to His enemies at Gethsemane, on the night in which He was betrayed ? Let us see. It happens at times that, in His love for souls, He steps into our lives, and "makes as though He would go further." It is to be a season of special grace, when His hand is held forth to help and enrich us wonderfully, when His voice says most clearly : "follow Me, and learn of Me." Perchance a sorrow is about to visit us, or a great sacrifice is demanded, or some loss or disappointment is at hand, even at the door. We are to hear for the first time the words : "friend, go up higher," and are to learn more of the science of the saints, and become more fully acquainted with the ways of divine love, which surpass all understanding. It is the grace of a life-time, and all depends on its acceptance or refusal, and its acceptance or refusal in great measure depend on the prompt and generous response of the will. Delay, discussion, the spirit of bargaining, they are fatal ; Jesus of Nazareth is passing by, and will never again return with the same grace and call. Then are we tempted to go out against our Lord "as against a robber." We call Him a robber ; we carry the swords of our sharp tongues to discuss His claims on what He has demanded, and to talk wildly about them. We have the clubs of our self-defence, of our ready invention of a thousand specious reasons why such a grace is unsuited for us, or unsuited for us at this moment, and hence impossible to accept. Our Lord ought then to reign, and desires to be our King, but this hour is taken from Him, and it becomes our own ! What can our Lord reply in such a case ? He can only add : "When I was daily with you in the Temple, you did not stretch forth your hands against me. When

you received me daily in holy Communion, when you were regular in your prayers, and daily held sweet conversation with Me, as between friend and friend ; when you came to Me in all anxieties, and went forth to your task aided by refreshment, then you never stretched forth your hands against Me. Our hands were locked in close friendship, our hands worked and gathered together, why has a change come now ? Why is the hour taken from Me, and become your own ? Friend, I do thee no wrong ; I am Jesus whom thou persecutest, I am Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. My son, give Me thy heart ; put Me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm, for love is strong as death. "My beloved to Me, and I to Him, who feedeth among the lilies."

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE FLIGHT OF THE APOSTLES

"THEN His disciples leaving Him, all fled away." There is no exception : St. Peter's short and ill-timed act of defence of his Master had ended disastrously, and now that the chief priests and magistrates of the Temple, stung to the quick by our Lord's words of gentlest irony as to their coming to Him "as against a robber," under cover of darkness, when He had sat in broad day-light day after day teaching in the Temple without any interference on their part, had again ordered His arrest, the Apostles were seized with dismay, and one and all fled away, leaving their Master alone, to be bound and led back to the city.

Such is the climax to three years of friendship and never-failing kindness ! "I have seen them dismayed and turning their backs ; they fled apace, and they looked not back. Terror was round about. My familiar friends are departed from me. My brethren have passed by Me as the torrent that passeth swiftly in the valleys." But a few hours before they had all declared that they were ready to go with their Lord to prison and to death ; but now, "they all leaving Him, fled away." "If my enemy had done it,

I could have borne it : but you, my friends, who did eat sweet meats with me !”

It is a picture, but too true, of all sinners. Into the quiet garden of our Lord’s Church, refreshed by His words, strengthened by His gift of love, we have been led ; but into that recess the noisy enemy has ventured to come, and, forgetting all, “we have left our Lord and fled,” and “walked with Him no more.” If we have returned, it is only by His grace and mercy ; but many have never come back, and God alone knows if ever they will. While we bewail our faithless conduct, let us often and earnestly pray for sinners, for those far from home, who have stifled all light, and turned a deaf ear to all warnings, and now are adding sin to sin. Perchance they are so oppressed with the weight of their sins and their distance from home, that they despair of return. We must not sit in judgment upon them, but in our daily prayers, in our Communions, recommend them to our Lord, reminding Him that He died for them, and imploring His mercy on them, that even at the last they may come back to Him. To pray for sinners must always be a large part of the business of any true client of our Lord.

At the flight of the Apostles, our Lord experienced the treatment which has been meted out to His greatest Gift from that day to this. What long hours of solitude He spends in the Tabernacle ! “His disciples leave Him, and flee away.” “My people hath forgotten Me days without number.” Let us have a devotion to the solitary and neglected sanctuaries throughout the world, and see that to visit our Saviour as often as we can is a practice of our lives. “Comfort Him, all you that are round about Him,” for “great is He that is in the midst of Thee, the holy One of Israel.” What a privilege at

all hours to have access to our King and best of friends ! How do we use it ? "Why wilt Thou be as a wandering man, as a mighty man that cannot save ? Thou, O Lord, art among us, and Thy Name is called upon us, forsake us not." We leave our Lord by sin, and by neglect, but to leave us is precisely the one thing that He never does. "I am with you all days, and will not leave you orphans ; come to Me and I will refresh you ; I am with you in tribulation ; comfort ye, comfort ye, my people ; no one shall snatch you from my hand." Let the desolate, and the sick and suffering take heart. We are never alone, for our Lord is ever with us. He has tasted of our solitude, of our discouragement, of our pain ; He shares all with us, sweetening it by His presence, relieving its strain by the promise of better things to come, when this our exile is ended. How "faithful" is the Lord ! Let us be "faithful," too, clinging to our Lord, persevering, and using the means to persevere, flying the occasions of sin, praying and watching, till the last summons comes. "Many men are called merciful : but who shall find a faithful man ? Who thinkest thou, is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath appointed over his family, to give them meat in season ? Blessed is that servant, whom when his Lord shall come he shall find so doing. Amen I say to you, he shall place him over all his goods. The just man shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord ; being confident of this very thing, that He who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus. Be not weary in well doing ; persevere

under chastisement : look to yourselves, that you lose not the things which you have wrought but that you may receive a full reward. Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto life everlasting."

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE YOUNG MAN IN THE GARDEN OF OLIVES

"And a certain young man followed Him having a linen cloth cast about his naked body, and they laid hold on him. But he, casting off the linen cloth, fled from them naked."—(St. Mark xiv, 51, 52.)

THIS slight incident in the sacred Passion is recorded by St. Mark alone, and seems to have escaped the notice of writers and commentators on the sacred history of our Lord's sufferings, as though it contained no special lesson ; and yet it must surely be numbered among the things that are "written for our instruction, on whom the ends of the world are come." There has been much discussion as to who the young man in question was ; some have thought it was St. John, but certainly it was not he, for the event is closely coupled by St. Mark with the flight of the Apostles, and we are told that "all the disciples, leaving our Lord, had fled away." Some again have thought it might be Lazarus, but most probably, if not certainly, the young man was St. Mark himself.

The agony of our Lord is over, Judas has arrived, and has betrayed his Master by a kiss, and our Lord is now a prisoner, because so He wills to be. Judas had brought with him "a great multitude," probably about two hundred men with torches, lanterns, and weapons, for "it was night." The

Apostles have all fled away, and our Lord is already on His way to the house of Annas, when lo ! a young man, aroused from sleep by the uproar, is seen close at hand. Probably he lived hard by, and hastily casting a linen garment over his naked body, had rushed forth to see what was happening. The soldiers seeing him, at once think he may be a follower of Jesus of Nazareth. Indeed he must have known Him, for he "followed" Him, and the Greek word used implies that he followed Him gladly. Since the soldiers have failed to capture any of the Twelve, they resolve at least to secure this new disciple. He is alone and defenceless, so the capture should be comparatively easy. "And they laid hold on him" ; the linen cloth is something for them to catch him by—there is a short struggle—but he is young, nimble and swift of foot, and "he casts off the linen cloth" (they may have that if they please), and "fled from them naked!"

If we carefully read the story thus briefly described, we can trace between the lines a certain tone of regret, mingled with shame, which helps to convince us that it is a personal narrative, and that the young man in question was none other than St. Mark. It is the record of a missed opportunity, and it is told in the plain and definite manner of one who here declares, for he is certain of it, that this was the great chance of his life, that he missed it, and that it never will come again ! Did our Lord perchance look on him in the garden, as He passed by, "looking for one to comfort Him" ? Did our Lord look on him as later He looked on St. Peter ? Did our Lord look on him and love him, as once He had looked on a young man who came to adore Him, and to learn from Him ? (St. Mark x, 17). It is very likely that such is the case, but like that young man, he had gone away, and now is sorrowful and ashamed, stripped and alone in

the darkness of night ! Had he gone with our Lord, and with Him been led a prisoner into Jerusalem, how different would all have been ! He might have been the first preacher of the Gospel of the Crucified, the first to declare that this Man had done no evil,” and so have taken that dignity and privilege from the Good Thief. Yes, simple and unknown people as we are, what we do, and what we fail to do, matters greatly. Even the least duty has its force, and weighs in the balance. The cause of our Lord, the welfare of His Church on earth, fluctuates between success and failure, between loss and gain, according to the lives we lead. Not one good deed done, not a temptation overcome, not a simple prayer breathed, not a kind word spoken, not a cup of cold water given in the name of Christ, that shall lose its reward or fail of its effect. This should surely encourage us to pray with confidence, to act with generosity, and thus to work daily and hourly for Christ. It is among the most sublime lessons of the Hidden Life of our Lord at Nazareth. “The foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise : and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong : and the base things of the world, and the things that are contemptible hath God chosen, and things that are not, that He might bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in His sight.” So do all things work together for good to them that love God, and whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever else we do, let us do all to the glory of God, not minding high things, but consenting to the humble.

But more : we must all suffer, and the endurance of our pain will be either for better or for worse, will be for our Lord or against Him. Our Lord, by His sacred Passion, has transfigured pain into glory and

merit, and has taught us how to turn the pain which all must endure to profit, and not to loss. Our Lord does not disguise the Cross, but shows it to us in its grim reality. The law of self-control must find a place in our lives, and the more it is enthroned and welcomed, the fuller and deeper will be our peace, the more fruitful will be our lives, the greater our power of doing good. In a word, to be seized as was the young man in the garden of Olives, for the sake of our Lord, having followed Him for a short space, means to be summoned to take ourselves seriously to task, with a real desire to serve Him, with a readiness to suffer with Him, by attacking some prominent fault and defect in our character. We are, for example, quick and hasty in temper, often moody and difficult to live with, wishing to be left alone, censorious of others, refusing all help and sympathy, refusing to speak, or speaking harshly. Thus grace and time are wasted, and a cloud of self-love hides from us the face of God. Does such yielding to self-love and passion free us from pain and suffering? Our Lord bids us suffer with Him by resisting the ill-temper and sullen mood, by checking the restless tongue. It will indeed cost us a searching pain to gain the victory, but we prefer to eat the forbidden fruit, for it is so fair to behold, and we "flounder at the Cross." We suffer keenly of course, nay, we suffer all the more for our weakness, but we suffer *against* our Lord, and on behalf of the prince of this world, who derides and mocks his victims after he has defeated and deceived them. We run away from our Lord, as did the young man in the garden at Gethsemane, casting off the robe of grace, and we find ourselves out in the cold, alone, in the darkness. "Religion frights us with a mien severe," and we are afraid, and turn coward. "Little souls on little

shifts rely, and coward acts of mean expedients try."

Had we kept to our Lord, and stood firm, and conquered, we should have suffered indeed, but peace would now reign, we should have "put on the Lord Jesus," and "borne in our body His marks." "Men suffer more by fleeing from the Cross than they would ever suffer by following it ; and often in order not to follow our Lord, we give into the hands of the enemy that which we are not willing to leave for the love of Him. We fly from the eternal, and we lose the temporal" (Fr. de la Palma). "Can you drink of the chalice which I drink of ?" says our Lord to each of us. We should answer : "Yes, we can"—"I judge not myself to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified : to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world, for they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences."

## CHAPTER XXIV

### OUR LORD BEFORE ANNAS

"THEN the band and the tribune, and the servants of the Jews, took Jesus, and bound Him : And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was the high priest of that year. Now Caiaphas was he who had given the counsel to the Jews : That it was expedient that one man should die for the people. The high priest, therefore, asked Jesus of His disciples, and of His doctrine, Jesus answered him: I have spoken openly to the world : I have always taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither all the Jews resort ; and in secret I have spoken nothing. Why askest thou Me ? ask them who have heard what I have spoken unto them : behold they know what things I have said. And when he had said these things, one of the servants standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so ? Jesus answered him : if I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil : but if well, why strikest thou Me ? And Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest."

It is the beloved disciple, St. John, who alone tells us that our Lord was thus brought to trial before Annas. The other Evangelists pass more quickly over the various trials of our Lord, and concentrate their

narrative mainly on His final condemnation, and the scenes of the scourging and crucifixion that followed. Annas was a man of great authority among the Jews : he had been high priest, and was the head of the Sanhedrim, well-versed in the law, and his hatred of our Lord was well known. It was likely, they thought, that he would greatly help them in making out a case against Him, and so facilitate their work with Pilate, the Roman Governor, who alone had the power to condemn anyone to death.

Though it is the dead of night, Annas is ready for his task. Gladly will he forfeit his sleep, for a feverish haste is consuming him, and his one desire is that before the great Sabbath dawns Jesus of Nazareth shall be no more. So our Lord, calm and dignified, standing with hands bound, amid the soldiers who guard Him jealously, is brought before Annas, who feels that he has at last got a chance of refuting and silencing our Lord, even as our Lord had so often refuted and silenced His adversaries. And first he asks our Lord "concerning His disciples and His doctrine." It was natural he should begin on these two points, for he wished to make out that our Lord had taught that tribute should not be given to Cæsar, and so make a charge against Him to the Roman authorities in Jerusalem, and also to make out that by gathering disciples together in vast numbers, He had made Himself the head of a party, dangerous to the State, and had stirred up the people, and destroyed the peace of the land.

But our Lord gave him a reply full of dignity indeed, but not one to satisfy an idle malicious curiosity. "I have spoken openly to the world : I have always taught in the synagogue, and in the Temple, whither all the Jews resort : and in secret I have spoken nothing. Why askest thou Me ? ask

them who have heard what I have spoken unto them : behold they know what things I have said."

What compassion and forgiveness run through those adorable words ! Annas could not have asked a more pertinent and awkward question. What could our Lord say ? He is asked about His disciples ! Where are they ? They have all fled, ashamed of Him, forgetful of Him, unwilling to stand by Him in His hour of need. They had been bold in their promises of fidelity, and professed their readiness to go to prison, yea to death itself, with Him, but now—where are they ? In His goodness, our Lord screens them, and hides their shame and faithlessness. But if He is silent, it is for us to answer the question of Annas. They are only "a little flock" it is true, but He has called them to be the salt of the earth, and given them a new name, clothed them with grace, fed them with the Sacraments, promised them a place in His kingdom, given them noble work and great privileges. They have seen His example, heard His words, enjoyed His presence, and benefited by His kindness. All this and more is true of the disciples whom Jesus loves, and they ought to be there in their thousands to tell of the great things which He that is mighty hath done for them, but all have left Him, and fled !

So, too, is the Church of God, the spouse of Christ, ever on her trial, bound and despoiled of her just liberties, before Annas, before a world that is as proud in its own conceits, as self-satisfied, as hostile to its Redeemer as was Annas. And the world asks the same question as Annas did—it asks about the "disciples and about the doctrine of our Divine Lord," for "by His fruits we shall know Him," they say. Where are His followers ? What manner of men are they ? Here are some who once followed

Him, but now they are on His side no more ; many have denied that they ever knew Him : many are glad, as they say, to be rid of His yoke : many have betrayed Him by bad Communions : many who once defended Him, now attack and revile Him : many who once gathered with Him, now are scattering His harvest, and trampling it under foot. And what of His doctrine ? He professes to make men holy by means of it, but we do not see it. His disciples speak of self denial, of purity, of temperance, yet from the lives of many of them, these things are conspicuous by their absence. They speak of patience and of charity, yet the most disordered homes, miserable through strife and anger, are Catholic homes, while certainly "the sharpest and unkindest tongue that ever I heard speak was that of one of that Man's disciples." Glibly does the world thus dispose of "the disciples and the doctrine of our Lord," with a verdict unjust, it is true, and a conclusion far beyond what is justified by the premisses, but still with some foundation in fact, telling us how careful we ought to be, for the eyes of the world are upon us, and men, in their heart of hearts, expect to see "our light shine before them that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father Who is in heaven." "Take away the stumbling-blocks out of the way of My people. Woe to the world because of scandals. For it must needs be that scandals come : but nevertheless, woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh."

When our Lord had spoken His reply to Annas, one of the servants standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying: "Answerest thou the high priest so ?" Who was this soldier ? We do not know for certain, but there is a tradition that his name was Malchus, whose right ear our Lord had but a few minutes before healed when St. Peter cut it off with his sword. Is the benefit so soon

forgotten ? In any case, a desire to stand well with Annas and to gain a cheap reputation and a measure of applause prompted that cruel act, and dealt that savage blow which felled our Lord to the ground. And is not our passage from friendship with our Lord to enmity towards Him, often deplorably rapid ? Perhaps on the very day of a Communion we offend Him wilfully and grievously. What He has done for us, what He has forgiven us, what He hopes to do for us in virtue of our union with Him—all is quickly forgotten, and from seeking His blessing and friendship, we are ready to pass in a moment to the camp of His enemies. And which of us is so filled with the spirit of our Lord, which of us so desires to imitate Him, that when we are struck or unkindly treated, when others are hard upon us and repay our kind deeds with harshness and ingratitude, will then answer like our Lord : “If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil : but if well, why strikest thou me ?” Are we not rather up in arms in a moment, and does not one sharp word lead quickly to another ? “Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart.”

And now let us put ourselves into our Lord’s place, and come before Him, who is indeed our High Priest, and place ourselves on our trial now, as one day we must, bound hand and foot perchance with the self-made fetters of sins and habits of sloth. “And the High Priest will ask us of our disciples and of our doctrine.”

Of our disciples first—of those we have influenced for good or for evil, of those we have drawn to God or away from Him by our example. Have you scandalised one of My little ones ? Such is the first question. Fathers and mothers, and those who have charge of the young, how far have you walked worthy of your

high vocation ? Have you by word ever sown an evil seed in the heart of a child ? And of our doctrine ? Have we taught people to think lightly of the things of God and of the main work of life ? Have we recommended to them books that we ourselves should never have read, and that are not fit for human eyes to rest upon ? What of our words ? We shall be judged for every idle word, for every unkind word, for every untrue word. "Who is the man that desireth life, and who loveth to see good days ? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. For the sins of the lips, ruin draweth nigh to the evil man. Death and life are in the power of the tongue ; well-ordered words are as a honey-comb ; a peaceable tongue is a tree of life, but that which is immoderate shall crush the spirit." Happy shall we be if on that "great and awful" day when our Lord shalt ask us of our disciples and of our doctrine, we can reply as He did to Annas : "I have always spoken openly to the world ; I have confessed Thee, O Lord, before men, and not been ashamed of Thy Cross ; I have taught Thy Law in the assemblies of men, and in the temples of Thy presence I have sung Thy praise."

"And Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas." So did the trial end, and the cruel fitters were again put upon our Lord's hands and feet. They had no right thus to bind their prisoner, for no charge had even been made against Him, still less proven. At our Lord's arrest in the Garden of Olives, in obedience to Judas's express words, they had first bound Him. "Lay hold on Him : hold Him fast," Judas had said, and it was their savage rush upon his Master, coupled with the cruel handling and the fitters, that had caused St. Peter to use his sword in His defence. And it was against being bound that our Lord had

made His protest. Our Lord loves to be free and unfettered in His work for us, because He loves us truly, but the world binds Him in crippling fetters, whenever it can. The Good Shepherd knows His sheep, and loves to be trusted by them. "It is the Lord, let Him do what is good in His sight," should be our spirit; "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," should be our desire; "Thy will, not mine, be done: Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" should be our prayer. It is the true attitude of a disciple whom Jesus loves, and who leans his head on the bosom of his Lord. Indeed, our Lord is always bound, a prisoner of love, behind the Tabernacle door, and there He binds Himself.

How often when the light of grace is given us, and some call on our generosity is made,—an obedience carefully chosen for our good, a cross suited to our strength, a sacrifice we can well afford to make—when one of these is offered, we rebel, for self-love speaks, and we bind our Lord, so that He cannot give us the thing that is good. If, then, we really gather with our Lord, and work with Him, we shall never bind Him, hand and foot: His journeys to knock at our door and sup with us, will always find us at home, with a welcome. His gifts, and demands, and invitations, will never be suspected, never rejected, but gratefully received, and gladly used to the full. He comes unto His own, or His own go to Him, as He calls His sheep by name. But we resist, and bind His hands, for we answer back, and we bargain about terms, and we send Him away bound.

Commend this matter to our Blessed Lady, the Mother of Sorrows, the Help of Christians, who once bound the arms and hands of her divine Child, when she wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, but only to protect Him from the coldness of men

who had no room for Him. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord" is her spirit and prayer: "I am ready, let Him do that which is good before Him: Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God. As for me, my prayer is to Thee, O Lord, for the time of Thy good pleasure, O God. My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, that I may perfect His work."

## CHAPTER XXV

### OUR LORD BEFORE CAIAPHAS

"AND Annas sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas." In this pithy and expressive phrase, St. John informs us of the next step in the Passion of our Lord. Annas had singularly failed, clever as he was, to obtain evidence from our Lord. As a fact, he had no right to seek evidence from Him at all, for a prisoner is not commonly asked to incriminate himself ; but such was the unjust and iniquitous course pursued in the trials of our Lord. They tried "to ensnare Him in His speech." The distance from the house of Annas to that of Caiaphas was probably very short, yet it will be safer (so they think) even if it be but a few paces, to bind our Lord afresh with the heavy fetters, which perhaps had been removed during His trial before Annas. Bind Him therefore afresh, lest He escape, and take Him bound to Caiaphas. "Now Caiaphas was he who had given the counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people," and doubtless to bring about the death of our Lord, and nothing short of His death, was the one object of Caiaphas when our Lord was brought before him that night. A charge must be made out to justify their going forthwith to Pilate, for his sanction to our Lord's execution. It

should further be noted that every rule of the proper Jewish legal procedure was now violated by Caiaphas, and he must have been well aware of this fact. The rules, inspired by justice and mercy, provided, first, that trials should take place in the council-hall within the Temple enclosure, not at the high priest's house ; that they be held during the day, not at night, and that the condemnation should not be made on the same day as the conviction. Lastly, it was quite contrary to the spirit of the Law to *seek* for witnesses, and the sacred narrative here implies that the search was anxious and long-continued. "So the chief priests and all the council sought for evidence against Jesus, that they might put Him to death, and found none. For many bore false witness against Him, and their evidences were not agreeing. And some rising up, bore false witness against Him, saying, we heard Him say : I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another not made with hands. And their witness did not agree. And the high priest, rising up in the midst, asked Jesus, saying : Answerest Thou nothing to the things that are laid to thy charge by these men ? But He held His peace and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, and said to Him : "Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the blessed God ? And Jesus said to him, I am. And you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming with the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rending his garments, saith. What need we any further witness ? You have heard the blasphemy. What think you ? Who all condemned Him to be guilty of death."

When our Lord had stood before Annas, the effects of His Agony and recent shedding of blood must have been plain for all to see, but now before Caiaphas He

presented an appearance that still more should have called for pity, since the blood was flowing from the blow He had received in the house of Annas. But Caiaphas is unmoved by the sight ; “he watcheth the Just Man, and seeketh to put Him to death” ; the false witnesses have arrived, and begin to give their evidence. “They all lie in wait for blood, and everyone hunteth his Brother to death” ; our Lord is “filled with reproaches.” “Unjust witnesses rising up have asked Me things I knew not : they repaid Me evil for good, to the depriving Me of My soul ; as one mourning and sorrowful, so was I humbled ; they tempted Me, they scoffed at Me with scorn, they gnashed upon Me with their teeth ; but I, as a deaf man heard not, and as a dumb man opening not his mouth.” Where do these witnesses come from? From Jerusalem—yes—but our Lord had not been there very much. Fetch them surely from Galilee, where His deeds of mercy have for the most part been wrought. Let the poor speak their mind ; let the sick who have been healed, the dead who have been raised to life, the broken-hearted who have been comforted, the blind who see, the lame who walk, the lepers who are cleansed, the sinners who are forgiven—let these raise their voices, and say, “He has done all things well, He has gone about doing good.” But these are too far away, and the charge must quickly be substantiated. Even from Jerusalem many could be found who would bear true witness to our Lord ; but these are not wanted now ; “they are at rest, disturb them not ; seek any you can, and put the words into their mouths that they are to say, and bring them in, that my house may be full of witnesses.” Thus, “many” came in, and amid their babel of perjury, there was no agreement, for there was no truth. “They

searched after iniquities, but they have failed in their search." The words of our Lord are twisted, His deeds are misrepresented, but the evidence did not tally, and was consequently worthless. No one knew this better than Caiaphas. In the case of any one else, he would have dismissed the charge, declared the prisoner innocent, given him abundant compensation, and punished severely those who had perjured themselves.

But now, he has the effrontery to "rise up in the midst" forsooth, as though fully satisfied that the moment for passing sentence had come, and to say to our Lord : "Answerest Thou nothing to the things which these witness against Thee ?" "But Jesus held His peace, and answered nothing."

It was a silence of reproof, a silence of charity, a silence of victory. "What have I done, or what evil is there in My hand ? Reflect and see that there is no evil in My hand, nor iniquity, neither have I sinned against thee, but thou liest in wait for My life to take it away. Why have you detracted the words of truth, whereas there is none of you that can reprove Me ? You dress up speeches only to rebuke, and you utter words to the wind. You endeavour to overthrow your friend." So might our Lord have made reply : "but Jesus held His peace, and answered nothing."

But what pain the sacred mind of our Lord must have endured at listening to that garbage of lies and ingratitude ! How hard it is to endure false evidence, of which there is such an abundance in the world to-day. No one is safe from the gnawing tooth of calumny, the cruel destructive tongue of detraction. False reports fill the air, and one cannot believe the quarter of what one hears. Oh, *then* for the grace to hold our peace, and answer nothing ! "Blessed are

you when men shall speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake. Pray for them that persecute and caluminate you." "Be not a detractor nor a whisperer among the people, for the detractor is the abomination of men. The whisperer and the double-tongued is accursed, for he hath troubled many that were at peace. Speak evil of no man. Hast thou heard a word against thy neighbour ? let it die within thee."

The scene before Caiaphas is daily renewed in the world's attitude to the Church of Christ. False witnesses are ever making their voices heard, hurling the wildest charges against the Church. Any stick is good enough to beat a dog with ; any calumny may be hurled at the Spouse of Jesus Christ. And they are believed, for no one seems to care to sift the truth. It might be thought that an institution of well-nigh two thousand years' standing, that is to be found in every land, that has "spoken openly to the world," that has so glorious and varied a record, would have commanded some respect, and that flippant men would have hesitated before they committed themselves to bearing false witness against her. But no ; it is the scene before Caiaphas over again, and they say the Church is the enemy of knowledge and of progress, the suppressor of the word of God. "They all condemn her to be guilty of death." Many false witnesses come in, and their evidence does not agree. But in spite of them "the empire of our Lord shall be multiplied, and there shall be no end of peace. He shall sit upon the Throne of David, and upon His Kingdom, to establish it, and strengthen it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth and for ever : the zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this."

In the light of this scene of the Sacred Passion, let

us ask if ever we bear false witness against our Lord ? When our lives are at variance with our professions and our opportunities, when our words and deeds do not harmonise with all that our Lord has done for us "our evidence does not agree."

The world, strangely enough, looks to the children of the Church for an example ; its eyes are keen to detect the inconsistencies between our belief and our conduct, and often it can say of us : "they have the name of being alive, but they are dead." Whenever we rebel against the Providence of God, we bear false witness against our Lord. Within us there are forces gently working to lead us on in the way of perfection, and we hear voices that plead "my Son, give Me thy heart"; we know the grounds for generosity, and have much to stir our ambition and make us follow our Lord and serve Him alone ; but we have something *against* our Lord, which rankles within us ; and forgetting that "the Lord loveth judgment, and will not forsake His saints, but they shall be preserved for ever," forgetting that "to those who love God all things work together unto good," we "rise up" before our Lord, and say to Him : "Answerest Thou nothing to the things which I witness against Thee ? "

A day is coming for us all when we shall be on our trial, arraigned at the bar of God's justice ; and then many witnesses will come in, our confessions, our Communions, our daily graces, our frequent chances and warnings ; these will give evidence indeed, "and their evidence will not agree" with the tale of sins, omissions and neglects that will raise their voice in evidence against us. And the Judge will say : "Answerest thou nothing to the things which these witness against thee" ? And we shall be able to answer never a word.

We may fitly now think of this judgment, for our Lord Himself draws our attention to it in His answer to the last adjuration of Caiaphas. He there asserts His Divinity, and that at the last He will come in the clouds of heaven to judge the world. "He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come, the Almighty."

"My Jesus, be not to me then a judge, but a Saviour." Bring, then, the true witnesses now to your aid, and hearken gladly to their testimony to our Lord's goodness to you.

Learn a lesson of deep devotion to the Providence of God ; learn to trust your Father's hand ; learn like our Lord before Caiaphas, to "answer nothing" in the hour of trial, but to bow your head in subjection to the divine decree, and say from a full heart : "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away : blessed be the name of the Lord."

Such an inward silence is true worship, and the sure foundation on which sanctity may be built. It is the silence of humility, of trust, of love. In such a soul, where the voices of false witnesses are for ever hushed, the voice of God will be clearly heard, and there will be union with God, and a thirst for His glory. The great work of God for men will stand forth in all its grandeur and beauty ; Mary will rise as the Morning Star, the spotless Lily in the garden of the Lord ; Jesus will stand before you as the most Beautiful among the children of men. Jesus, now reigning in glory, will appear as the Man of Sorrows, and Mary, now Queen of Heaven, as the Queen of Martyrs ; and you shall see that their road, the road of the Cross, must be your road too, for the servant is not above his Lord.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE DENIALS OF ST. PETER

THE love of St. Peter for our Lord is strikingly illustrated on many occasions during the three years of the Public Ministry, and stands out most remarkably in the closing scenes of our Lord's life. St. Peter secured the ass on which our Lord was to ride in triumph into Jerusalem, and it was he also who prepared the last Paschal meal. Assuredly no mind was more filled with thought and anxious foreboding, no heart was more moved, as they began the last Supper together, than was that of St. Peter. The triumph of Palm Sunday had gladdened him ; his ears caught eagerly the sound of the Hosannas, his eyes streamed with tears of joy at the waving of the branches of palm. But this had been followed by our Lord's great discourses on the end of the world and on the destruction of Jerusalem, and we know from certain verses in the sacred narrative (*e.g.* St. Mark xiii, 3) how profound an impression these had made on the mind of Peter, already occupied with the anticipation of the Sacred Passion. He knew and felt deeply that a great change was at hand, that his hours in his Master's society were numbered, and it was with anxious feelings indeed that he entered the Supper room, and sat down near his

Master, as Scripture is careful to tell us. And first he sees our Lord kneeling before him. Never had that happened before, so far as we know. "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet? Thou shalt never wash my feet." But such resistance to divine love is vain, and the feet were washed, and dried by the same tender hands. It is an awful thing to be treated almost too kindly by a friend; we become confused, and cannot speak, and feel helpless to make a return. Then came the announcement of the betrayer, a very agony to St. Peter. As a rule, with his eager impetuosity, he would at once have spoken, but the thought that his Master would be betrayed, and that the man to do the deed was actually in the room with him, simply overwhelmed him, and he had to keep silence. But he saw his Master "troubled in the spirit," and the thought strikes him: "I cannot speak myself, but there is leaning on the bosom of Jesus one of the disciples whom Jesus loved, I will beckon to him." He did so, and said to him: "Who is it of whom He speaketh?"

Later on our Lord communicated him for the first time, and ordained him priest, and then spoke to him a sentence of special might and significance: "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, and thou being converted confirm thy brethren."

Then came the long discourse of our Lord, the singing of the hymn, and together they start for the Garden of Olives. On the way across the brook Cedron, our Lord warned them, saying: "All of you shall be scandalized in Me this night. And Peter answering said to Him: Although all shall be scandalized in Thee, I will never be scandalized. Jesus said to him: Amen, I say to thee that in this

night, before the cock crow twice, thou wilt deny Me thrice. Peter said to Him : Yea, though I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee."

Having reached the garden, St. Peter was warned that he should pray, but he slept instead. His eyes were heavy with sorrow, for in that awful night he had already wept bitterly. At length he is roused by the advent of the betrayer, and strikes the blow that cut off the right ear of Malchus. Our Lord reproved him, and sheltered him from violence by His miracle of mercy and gentleness. The order to arrest our Lord is soon given—and will no one protest ? Up till now St. Peter has never been at a loss for a word ; has he no words ready now ? Can he not protest his Master's innocence, and speak His praises, as is His due ? His sword is rightly in its scabbard, for his Master told him to put it there, but He never told him not to speak, and certainly He never told him to run away ! Yet this is what took place ; "the disciples all leaving Him, fled away."

A great mistake has been made, but St. Peter will try to rectify it. He so far recovers himself as to resolve to go back to the city, and rejoin his Master. Loyalty surely was his strong point ; no one had been more faithful than he ; but he did not know himself. He had neglected our Lord's command to watch and to pray, he had scorned His urgent warning, and already he had failed just where he would have said he was least likely to. But, stung to the quick, he was now to recover himself, and so "Peter followed Him afar off !" That was not the place for an apostle ; he had not been "afar off" at the Transfiguration ; why should he be so now ? So he went back to Jerusalem, for he wished "to see the end," and turned his steps to the house of Caiaphas, for he heard that his Master was there, and feeling cold and

weary, he saw a fire of coals, and “sat with the servants, and warmed himself.”

In a way, there was not much else for him to do, but those who also enjoyed the warmth of the fire (for the nights in Palestine at that time of the year are very cold) were not the friends of our Lord, and St. Peter was in the midst of a society he should never have frequented. Every force was at work there that would operate towards a fall. The tepidity of following our Lord afar off, the evil companionship, a too great regard for personal comfort, the curiosity that had driven him to where he now found himself. And here St. John, as so often, comes to our aid, and shows us how St. Peter came to be in the court of the high priest. “And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple (*i.e.* St. John). And that disciple was known to the high-priest, and went in with Jesus into the court of the high-priest, but St. Peter stood at the door without. The other disciple therefore, who was known to the high-priest, went out, and spoke to the portress, and brought in Peter” (St. John xviii, 15, 16). Very soon of course he became the observed of all observers. He was a stranger—and what was his name? He spoke rather strangely, with a Galilaean accent—why was this? He did not seem too comfortable when they spoke of what happened in the Garden of Olives, of the arrest of our Lord, of how one of them had made a short show of defence, and cut off the ear of Malchus, and how at the last all the friends of “the Galilaean” had fled, and left him alone in their hands. St. Peter heard all this, and seemed ill at ease; the light of the fire lit up his face, and his features told a tale of anxiety and nervousness. Thus he excited the attention and curiosity of “the maid that was portress,” and she looked hard at him

and at length, feeling sure of her facts, she said : "This man was also with Jesus of Nazareth. Yes, art not thou also one of this Man's disciples ?" The question was so confident, that an affirmative reply was sure to be given. There was practically no doubt in the matter. But Peter denied before them all, saying : "I know not what thou sayest. Woman, indeed I know Him not. I neither know nor understand what thou sayest." And Peter went forth before the court, and the cock crew, and St. Peter heard it ! But it acted as no timely warning to him, nor did it recall to his mind what our Lord had said to him, or help him to realise what he had done. Apparently he continued where he was, and sat by the fire, and warmed himself ! Later on, however, he arose, and "went out of the gate" of the court of the "High Priest's Palace," and as he did so another maid saw him, and she saith to them that were there : "This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. This is one of His disciples." Again the statement was so definite and confident, as to leave little doubt of its truth. Yet again Peter denied with an oath, "I do not know the man." The second denial is stronger than the first ; it is made with a certain degree of temper, and is accompanied by an oath, whereas the first was but a timid assertion that the maid was mistaken in what she had said. Yet still to the mind of St. Peter no realisation as yet has come of that of which he has already twice been guilty. And strangely between the second and third denial there is about the space of an hour's interval—with time, as one might suppose, for thought and reflection—yet St. Peter continued where he was, and changed neither his society nor his occupation.

And so after a little while, they that stood by came, and said to Peter : "Surely thou also art one of them,

for thou art also a Galilaean, for even thy speech doth discover thee.” Let us carefully notice the word “came” as here used in St. Matthew’s account. Until now individuals merely had spoken ; but now many have got together, and have made up their minds unmistakably that St. Peter is “one of that Man’s disciples,”—and so they go to him in a body, and declare to him their absolute conviction of the fact. Naturally enough they choose as their spokesman “one of the servants of the high priest, a kinsman to him whose ear Peter cut off.” He had been present in the Garden of Olives that night, and told St. Peter that he had been there also. “Did I not see thee in the garden with Him ?” There was no possible loop-hole ; they were sure of their facts, and perhaps a little annoyed at St. Peter having denied the truth more than once already, instead of boldly owning up to it. What could St. Peter do ? He must either confess that he has lied, or he must repeat what he has already said, even more strongly, if possible. He chose the latter alternative, and “began to curse and to swear that he knew not the Man of whom they spoke.”

“And immediately the cock crew again.” At that very moment our Lord also is led across the court of the High Priest’s Palace, at the conclusion of His trial before Caiaphas, and so met St. Peter, and heard the last of his curses mingling with the cockcrow.

“And the Lord turning looked on Peter !” It is St. Luke alone that thus pictorially describes the conversion of St. Peter. Only on meeting the gaze of his Master did he realise what he had done, and recall to mind every warning he had received. “And Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said to him, ‘Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice.’ And going forth, he wept bitterly.”

This is the last mention of St. Peter in the hours of the Sacred Passion. We do not meet him with St. John at the foot of the Cross. "He went out," alone, and mourned over his fall, with "the sorrow that is according to God, which worketh penance steadfast unto salvation." So far as we know, he never went to Mount Calvary. He had failed to profess his faith in his Lord, and had acted from motives of human respect, and "been ashamed of the Gospel." He had "wavered like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried about by the wind," and had attempted "to bear the yoke with unbelievers."

But "what concord hath Christ with Belial ? what part hath the faithful with the unbeliever ? With the mouth confession is made unto salvation." St. Peter must wait till Easter dawns, and then he shall run to meet his Lord, declaring he is no longer worthy to be called His friend, and atoning for his triple denial by a triple profession of faith and love. Meanwhile, through all the hours of Good Friday, until he can meet the Mother of Sorrows in the Supper Room that night, and there before all admit his fault, he must bear the burden of his fall alone, and "his virtue must be made perfect in his infirmity." "But the soul that is sorrowful for the greatness of evil she hath done, and goeth bowed down, and feeble, and the eyes that fail, and the hungry soul giveth glory and justice to thee, the Lord." How fully in those long hours of solitude and sorrow did St. Peter learn the lesson of humility, of distrust of self, of his nearness to sin, of how easy it is to pass from one extreme to another, so that watchfulness, prayer, the avoidance of dangerous occasions, the prompt resistance of even the beginnings of evil are necessary for us to the very end. *Felix Petri culpa !* St. Peter fell but once ; the look of his Lord brought him to his senses ; he

never forgot it, but to the end was filled with that abiding sorrow for sin which is so strong a preventive of future falls. Most fitly may we make our own many of the words of the inspired narrative of this scene : "Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee," yes, He has called us thus to be His friends ; "I know Him not, though so long a time I have been with Him." "Thy speech doth discover thee," yes, if "it be always in grace, seasoned with salt, that we may know how we ought to answer every man."

"And the Lord turning, looked on Peter." "*Deus tu conversus, vivificabis nos.*" "Turn to us, O Lord, and give us fresh life : create in me a clean heart, O Lord, and renew a right spirit within me : the sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit : a contrite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."

## CHAPTER XXVII

### OUR LORD BLINDFOLDED AND SPAT UPON

THE informal and illegal trial of our Lord before Caiaphas may be considered to have closed by about one o'clock in the morning of the first Good Friday. Nothing further could be done till six o'clock when the Sanhedrim were to meet, and having quickly passed their sentence of death on our Lord, hurry Him off to Pilate. But the interval of about five hours was to be filled by intense anguish and ignominy for our Lord. The sport of cruel, angry soldiers of the Pretorian guard, in a prison probably, cold and foul-smelling, "He gave His body to the strikers, and His cheeks to them that plucked them." "Then did they spit in His face, and buffeted Him, mocked Him, and struck His face with the palms of their hands. They blindfolded Him, and smote Him on the face." With the fists, and with the palms of their hands (Holy Scripture expressly states both), their blows fell fast, with cruelty and violence. "He calleth Himself the Son of God. He glorieth that He hath God for His Father. Let us see, then, if His words be true : let us prove what shall happen to Him, and we shall know what His end shall be. For if He be the true Son of God, He will defend Him and will deliver Him from the hands of His

enemies. Let us examine Him by outrages and tortures, that we may know His meekness and try His patience. These things they thought, and were deceived, for their own malice blinded them."

It is not a little remarkable that in two of the predictions of His sacred Passion, our Lord should have mentioned the fact that His enemies would spit upon Him (St. Mark x, 34 and St. Luke xviii, 32). It is remarkable, because, awful as the outrage was, it was in point of pain a minor suffering of the sacred Passion, though in point of insult as great as any other. The outrage is recorded by St. Matthew and St. Mark, who both record that it took place on two occasions—once in the night of Holy Thursday, and once after the crowning with thorns on the morning of Good Friday (St. Matt. xxvi, 67 ; and xxvii, 30 ; St. Mark xiv, 65 and xv, 19). Moreover, the blindfolding was an aggravation of the pain, for if one is to be struck, it is a certain help to know who gives the blow, when it is coming, and to what part of one's person it is directed. But this is denied to our Lord. He was blindfolded ! "He that planted the ear, shall He not hear, or He that formed the eye, doth He not see ?" No, the eyes of the Lord are an offence to men, for they love the darkness rather than the light ; and if they can, they will blindfold Him, and then give way to their evil passions, and mock and deride, for they think to have shuffled off all responsibility, and they ask in derision : Prophesy unto us, who is it that struck Thee ? It is awful to see one who is helpless, say an animal, being wantonly beaten and ill-treated ; and here there is no one to speak for our Lord—no check on their outrages, no limit to their blows, and the half has not been told us. And this is meted out to one who is not only alone, but blind ! The eyes of our Lord

must have been so beautiful and expressive ; they are often mentioned in the Gospels ; they had expressed anger and indignation ; they had been the joy of our Lady ; they had gazed on the rich young man with love and appreciation ; that very night “the Lord turning had looked on Peter” and brought him to tears, but now “His look is as it were hidden.” His head, which was “as the finest gold,” is battered with blows, “His locks which were as the branches of palm-tree, black as a raven,” are used to torment Him, for He is raised by the hair many times. “His eyes, which were as doves upon brooks of waters, which are washed with milk, and sit beside the plentiful streams,” are blindfolded, “His cheeks, which were as beds of aromatical spices set by the perfumes,” are plucked, covered with spittle, bruised, and smeared with blood, “His lips which were as lilies dropping choice myrrh,” are swollen and livid, quivering from many a blow. “I am a man of sorrows, a man without help, the poor man of a broken heart. I am become miserable, and bowed down to the end. I am glutted with reproaches. Comfort is hidden from My eyes ; I am become a stranger to my brethren. I am forgotten as one dead from the heart. My whole head is sick, My whole heart is sad.”

“And Jesus was silent.” “He was examined by outrages and tortured, that they may know His meekness, and try His patience ; they have spoken with the lips, and wagged the head ; they that drank wine made Him their song ; they have looked and stared upon Him.” He sits solitary, and holds His peace, because He hath taken it upon Himself. All the night long His enemies reproached Him, and swore against Him, as He sat alone, as a sparrow all alone on the house-top.”

Our Lord suffered thus to atone for the sins of those who make their eyes the channels of sin, who sin by curiosity, or who do not observe that careful custody of the eyes which is so great a protection in the hour of temptation. Thus did He sanctify that precious sense of sight, and suffered His blindfolding in union with, and on behalf of, those who suffer from want of all light and sweetness in their work for Him, in their prayers and pains, from which they derive no consolation, in which they are alone, in a darkness of soul, not seeing the least fruit for all their toil. As our Lord was thus cruelly and repeatedly struck, He did not *see* the Blood that flowed, the price He was paying ; He only felt the pain, and He was silent. Let all those who labour and are heavy-burdened, unite themselves in all hours of darkness, and spiritual dryness with their Saviour blindfolded, in the gloom of that prison, and so learn to endure, "for there is a reward to their work."

Have we any share in this scene ; do we ever blindfold our Lord ? Yes, when we blindfold ourselves, and refuse to take His point of view, with reference to the place which the Cross must hold in our lives. We should seek to maintain our Lord's point of view with reference to life and its purpose, sin and its evil, trials and their work, God and His claims, the world and its vanities. But often we cling to our own point of view, through some suggestion of pride, some thoughts of self-satisfaction ; we lose all relish in handling what is in reality the material of our heavenly crown, and find ourselves in a solitary prison of our own seeking, with thoughts of pride to torment us, with at least the beginnings of rebellion and discontent. We blindfold our Lord when we blindfold ourselves, and refuse to look at our faults aright. They are pointed out to us by

those who have a right to point them out, but we have neither the humility nor the generosity to make the truth our own, and so to amend. "Lord, that I may see ; that I may see Thee, and see myself aright, as Thou seest me."

But more. "I am become their by-word ; they abhor Me, and are not afraid to spit in My face." Men only spit on what they despise and consider vile, or on that with which they are infuriated, or on what they wish to render as vile and repulsive as possible. The Bride of Christ is not above her Spouse, and the Church of Christ is spat upon in every age. Bound hand and foot, crippled in her efforts for good, receiving heavy blows with all the might that diabolical hatred can impart, she is also spat upon. "They spit in her face," to disfigure her beauty, to miswrite her history, to deprive her of all her attractions, to make her unsightly and repulsive, so that for nothing she has done is there a word of appreciation or of gratitude, but all is contempt. "Let us examine her by outrages and tortures, that we may know her meekness, and try her patience. All they that saw her, have laughed her to scorn, they have spoken with the lips and wagged the head ; they that drank wine have made her their song ; they have looked and stared upon her."

God grant that we despise no part of our Lord's work and provision for us, though we be ungrateful, and generally wanting in appreciation of the debt we owe for the "mighty works that have been wrought in us." But are there none among the friends of our Lord whom we positively dislike, and that with but slender cause, in all probability ? We take a delight in their disparagement, we belittle them, and glory to speak ill of them, often in a tone of bitterness and contempt. Such people "spit" on

our Lord, for “as long as you do it to one of these His least brethren, you do it unto Him.”

Again, do we believe at all in the power of praise ? do we ever exercise it ? do we understand that to give praise and encouragement when due, to express appreciation where richly deserved, is a part of the duty of charity ? It is a very power for good, and gives strength, and sheds peace around, for it is a true form of sympathy, of “becoming all things to all men.” How often is this overlooked or denied ! There are many who take delight in finding fault, and heaping ridicule ; they will gladly throw cold water on good efforts if they can, and not only never praise, but refuse to express appreciation, where they know quite well it is deserved. Such people “spit” in the face of our Lord, for “as long as they do it unto one of these His least brethren, they do it unto Him.” Let us obliterate, for a moment, these awful scenes of the Passion, and read in the record of Scripture that when Caiaphas had tried our Lord, He was given a pillow on which to rest His head, and that no more shame and indignity and pain were heaped upon Him until the following morning. Imagine this to have been the case, and at once you greatly minimise the horrors of the Sacred Passion. Imagine also that every slur, every ungrateful, spiteful word, every disparaging remark, were changed into warm, well-meant, and well-measured words of praise, of sympathy, appreciation and encouragement, and at once you have wiped the tears from many eyes. You have “given joy,” you have ceased to spit in the face of our Lord, and, like St. Veronica, you have begun to wipe the blood and sweat and spittle from off His brow, for “as long as you do it unto one of these His least brethren you do it unto Him.”

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE LAST TRIAL OF OUR LORD BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM

"AND as soon as it was day, the ancients of the people, and the chief priests and scribes came together, and they brought Him into their council, saying, If thou be the Christ, tell us. And He saith to them : If I shall tell you, you will not believe Me. And if I shall also ask you, you will not answer Me, nor let Me go. But hereafter the Son of man shall be sitting on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all : Art Thou then the Son of God ? Who said : You say that I am. And they said : What need we any further testimony ? for we ourselves have heard it from His own mouth. And the whole multitude of them rose up, and led Him away to Pilate."

The early trials of our Lord before Annas and Caiaphas with other members of the Sanhedrim (a few of whom may be supposed to have been present) are recorded with some fullness by St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. John, but are wholly omitted by St. Luke. They took place on the night of our Lord's arrest, and had as their object the collection of evidence against Him on which the whole Council might speedily pass sentence of death,

when it met together in the early morning. This meeting would take place about six o'clock in the morning of Good Friday. "And straightway in the morning" as St. Mark says, and "as soon as it was day," to use St. Luke's phrase (both narratives implying the indecent haste with which the matter was conducted), "the ancients of the people, and the chief priests and the scribes came together." There is something formal and determined in this detailed enumeration of the various sections that composed that council. They are come together for the final trial of our Lord, and of this trial St. Luke alone gives an account, though it is very briefly mentioned both by St. Matthew and St. Mark.

So they brought our Lord into the council. What a spectacle He must have presented to their gaze ! The treatment He had received for many hours during the night from the men that held Him ; the buffets, the blows, the spittings, the rough usage, had known no cessation ; all these, together with the absence of rest, and the mental anguish, now told their tale, and surely pleaded for some consideration, but our Lord was arraigned before those who had "left the weightier things of the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith," before blind guides who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel, before those who were like to whitened sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones and of all filthiness, and they will encompass the death of their Divine Prisoner by the speediest possible means. The evidence collected by Caiaphas in the night had proved worthless even in their own eyes ; but Caiaphas had then succeeded in making our Lord declare that He was the Son of God, and on this charge they now brought Him before the council as being clearly worthy of death. No further discussion

is needed : no further witnesses need be called, for they will call one witness, and only one, and it is our Lord Himself ! Again He shall witness against Himself, and the matter of the accusation is His Divinity, that "He being a man, made himself God" (St. John x, 33).

So, without further ado, they straightway say to our Lord : "If Thou be the Christ tell us." Most solemnly and clearly had our Lord replied to that question in the night. "I adjure Thee by the living God," Caiaphas had said, "to tell us if Thou be the Christ, the Son of God"; and our Lord had made answer : "I am." It is a question after our Lord's own Heart, one to which He will ever reply, a charge He will ever gladly bear. The answer to it had formed the matter of St. Peter's profession of faith, and our Lord had blest him warmly for what he had said. He had proclaimed his Divinity by His words, and by His deeds ; He will now proclaim it still more by His death. On this charge He will be condemned, on this charge He will suffer and die, for it is the central truth of Christianity, that on which all other dogmas depend, the source from which all other dogmas flow.

So our Lord made reply. Already He had told His disciples that respect was due to those who "sit in the chair of Moses" (St. Matt. xxiii, 3), and now He Himself treats them with marked respect. "If I shall tell you, you will not believe Me : and if I shall also ask you anything, you will not answer Me, nor let Me go. But hereafter the Son of Man shall be sitting on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all : Art Thou then the Son of God? And He said : You say that I am. Then they said : "What need we any further testimony ? For we ourselves have heard it from His mouth. And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death." Once

more our Lord is bound with the heavy fetters He had already borne, and is led away to Pilate for the sentence to be ratified.

This is a scene quite unique in the history of the Sacred Passion, for it is the only one in which no kind of physical violence was offered to our Lord. It is one to fill us with reverence, and to call forth an act of faith. "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God ; we have believed, and we have known that Thou camest forth from God ; Thou art the Way, the Truth, and the Life, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End ; I believe, Lord, help Thou mine unbelief." Our Lord here deigns to enter into judgment with us, His servants ; He is on His trial before us, and welcomes the examination, even as He prizes our simple faith in Him. Let us examine His works and words, and gather together the proofs of His divinity. Say nothing now of His love, of His mercy, of the generosity of His sacred Heart, for it is His Divinity that is at stake, and on that rock we rest and build our faith. Let us also say to Him : "if Thou be the Christ tell us, for if Christ be not risen from the dead, then is our faith vain, and we are of all men the most miserable."

He has spoken openly to the world, and on no point more strongly or more fully than on His Divinity. He bids us believe for His works sake : "If I had not come, and spoken to them," He said, "they would not have sin : but now they have no excuse for their sin. If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin : but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father" (St. John xv).

The waves and the winds obey Him ; by the power of His word the dead rise again, the lepers are cleansed, the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear ;

He has power to lay down His life, and power to take it up again, for He is the image of the Invisible God, the First-born of every creature, the Head of all principality and power ; there is one God and one Mediator of God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a redemption for all ; in Him were all things created, in Heaven, and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers ; all things were created by Him and in Him, who being the Brightness of His Glory and the Figure of His substance, and upholding all things by the Word of His power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the Majesty on High. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, and we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. We know that the Son of God is come. And He hath given us understanding, that we may know the true God, and may be in His Son. This is the true God, and life eternal. Before Abraham was made, He was. We believe, Lord, help Thou our unbelief. We have believed and have known that Thou camest forth from God. Lord, increase our faith, for blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.

But with the divinity of our Lord there goes also His Judgeship, as our Lord Himself tells us again in this scene. We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ ; we shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty, for He is Head over all the Church, He is appointed King over Sion. The Father doth not judge any man, but hath given all judgment to the Son, even as the Father hath appointed a day wherein He will judge the world in equity, by the Man whom He

hath appointed, giving faith to all by raising Him up from the dead. The Lord of hosts hath decreed this, and who can disannul it ? His hand is stretched out and who shall turn it away ?

Thus in this scene of the Sacred Passion our Lord is not so much the Man of Sorrows, as He is God, our Teacher, our Lord, and our Judge. He calls for our faith, for if faith be secured, love and obedience will follow. "Thou art terrible, and who shall resist Thee? I believe, Lord, help mine unbelief ; teach me in all my works to remember my last end, and I shall never sin, for what shall I do when God shall rise to judge ? and when He shall examine, what shall I rise to answer ? What will we do in the day of visitation and of the calamity which cometh from afar ? to whom shall we flee for help ? unless we have recognised the things that are to our peace in the day of visitation, before they are hidden from our eyes : unless we have understood that 'we must all be manifested before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil.' "

"Blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city." "Behold I come quickly, and My reward is with me, to render to every man according to his works." "Come, Lord Jesus."

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE PRICE OF BLOOD

THREERE is no more striking object lesson in the growth of sin and its power over the human mind and will, than is furnished by the history of the Apostle who betrayed our Lord. We may there study it to the full, and realise at once its blinding and hardening force. It called forth the most awful words our Lord ever spoke : "It were better for that man if he had not been born." Who can rightly estimate the boon it must have been to have lived with our Lord, as Judas did, for three whole years, and none of the Twelve can have profited by such advantage more than he, for by nature he was more richly endowed than any of the other Apostles. But he quarrelled with his Master on one point, and his mind took an evil turn ; his heart was poisoned because the kingdom of Christ was not of this world, and did not " come with observation."

In all the other Apostles there was love and esteem of their Master ; they "continued with Him in His temptations," they knew that He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and recognised that "He had the words of eternal life." Sluggish and dull as they may have been, their ideals were our Lord's ideals, they saw what they must aim at, and were ready

at least to try. In a word, they were satisfied with our Lord, and rejoiced to be in His society, as "one rejoices who has found great treasure," and it is here that Judas failed. Our Lord did not satisfy him. No doubt He did so in many points ; there was much that was noble and elevating in His spirit and teaching and aims that appealed to Judas, but (so he argued) why does not the Master do more ? Why is this channel of success forbidden to me ? Why is my liberty so curtailed ? Why is the kingdom of Christ built and founded on these lines and not on others, which surely are possible to One whom even the winds and the seas obey ? The mind of Judas was soured towards our Lord, for his love was set on ambition, on a greed for money that might easily have been satisfied, but never was so. Little by little our Lord became an object of aversion to Judas, and he was willing to betray Him for thirty pieces of silver, or even less. Repentance became difficult or impossible, though remorse was easy, but remorse contains no love. Such a soul has lost the power of loving, and its last state is worse than its first : "it were better for that man if he had not been born !" "How are they brought to desolation as the dreams of them that awake." (Ps. lxxii). "Friend Judas, whereunto art thou come ? What a change in you ! Once you loved Me, now you see no beauty in Me, that you should desire Me." Yes, it is only the children of God's true Church who can betray our Lord as Judas did. We do not judge Caiaphas, or Annas, or Pilate, or Herod, nor did our Lord do so. Our Lord does not say on Good Friday : "O Pilate, what have I done to thee, or in what have I molested thee ?" But he does say : "*My people* what have I done to thee ?" So of Judas who "has gone to his own place"—our Lord judged

him publicly before all : "it were better for that man if he had not been born."

Those outside the Fold have not our lights and responsibilities. We know our Lord as they can never know Him here below ; we know Him "in the breaking of bread," we "know the places to which He goes," and have a key to the gardens to which He resorts "with His disciples." Among such it is that the true betrayers are to be found ; they grow dissatisfied with our Lord and see no beauty in His ways ; they despise His spirit and aims, and feel He is playing a losing game, yet asks them to be His partners. So love grows cold, holy practices are dropped, a spirit of discontent and criticism is allowed to grow, and it ends in betrayal. "Friend, whereunto art thou come ?"

Certain it is, as Scripture tells us, that Judas never thought his deed meant death for our Lord : matters indeed went far further than he intended, and he found it was not in his power to stop them. Not for long did he enjoy his gain ; nay, he never enjoyed it at all, unless the actual possession of the money was a joy to him ; and it is a point not lightly to be passed over that he never spent one farthing of his ill-gotten coin. He was too occupied in those dread hours of remorse in seeking to stay the course of events ; and now, in the early morning of Good Friday, the news is quickly passed through the crowded and excited streets of Jerusalem that "the Galilaean" is condemned to be crucified that very day. Judas heard this, and despair seized him ; and "seeing that Jesus was condemned, repenting himself, he brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and ancients, saying : I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. But they said : What is that to us ? Look thou to it. And casting down the pieces of silver in

the Temple, he departed : and went and hanged himself with a halter."

"Why have I hated instruction, and my heart consented not to reproof ? and have not heard the voice of them that taught me, and have not inclined my ear to masters ? Into how much tribulation am I come, and into what floods of sorrow wherein now I am, I that was pleasant and beloved in my power ! But now I remember the evils that I have done. What hath pride profited me, or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought me ? All these things have passed away like a shadow. Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil. My iniquity is greater than that I should deserve pardon. I have lost all hope, for I have loved strangers, and I will walk after them. Why is my sorrow become perpetual, and my wound desperate, so as to refuse to be healed ? "

What is to be done with the money ? There it lies on the floor of the court of the Temple, awaiting some destination or other. The chief priests pick it up, and consulting together, they say : "it is not lawful to put them into the corbona, because it is the price of blood." You hypocrites ! was it not the price of blood when you took it *out* of the corbona ? did you not intend it so to be ? If it be not lawful to put it back, neither was it lawful to take it out.

So they "consulted together," and hearing of some field that belonged to a potter, and which he was ready to sell, they buy it with the money, to be a burying-place for strangers ! "For this cause that field was called Haceldama, that is the field of blood, even to this day."

How clumsy, how cruel is the world in the way it carries out its revolt against God, and in the treatment of its dupes ! It carries things to excess,

and then sees no way out of the trouble it has caused, save ways that are bitter, agonising, and heartless. Thus, too, do we act when we allow any passion to run riot in our lives. Once trample under foot the law and spirit of self denial, and soon such a passion of evil possesses us. Satan will enter into us ; an opportunity to gratify the passion will soon present itself, and regardless of the cost, we shall seize it gladly. It may entail the betrayal of our Lord, but that matters not ; we violate our conscience, and are paid for our trouble with a paltry sum, and later we must bring back all we have gained. It was taken from the treasury of our life, but it will not go back there ; it is the price of blood, the price for which we were ready to cause our Lord to shed His blood in vain, and with it shall be bought a field that for ever shall be called a field of blood, and shall be used as a burial place for strangers, the evil spirits, evil thoughts, evil words, evil deeds, that ought ever to remain strangers to our souls.

How different is all work done for our Lord ! Day by day, as we try with cheerful good-will to serve Him, His peace becomes more and more deep-rooted in our hearts, there are no misgivings, no gnawings, no feverish remorse ; never do we have to bring back what we have earned in His service, for it passes out of our keeping, and is laid up in eternity, where no thieves break in and steal. No one turns coldly upon us, and says : "what is that to us ?" We commit our way into our Lord's hands, and it is all in all to Him that we are gathering with him. All is treasured in the eternal corbona, and there becomes the means of providing a resting place for friends, not a burial place for strangers—yes, for friends, who will welcome us again some day—our good deeds, good thoughts, good words, souls, too, delivered from

Purgatory, who will stand us in good stead, like staunch and loyal friends, when we are weighed in the balance, and our lives are tested by the eye of God. Whatever we do for the world or for self—whatever we do for the cause of evil, or receive as payment for our work therein—will surely come back to us. Once we looked upon it with gladsome eyes, for it shone like the silver of Judas before us ; but the day soon comes when its aspect is changed, and we bring it all back, just as it was, for it has borne no interest. We may then beg for a hearing, but the heartless world will only turn upon us in our vexation, and say : “What is this to us ? Look thou to it.” “Put back for me,” is then our cry, “what you took out of my treasure.” “No,” they reply, “it is not lawful”; and let them add, if they can be true : “it is not possible, for it is the price of blood ; for its sake you condemned your Lord and betrayed Him ; look you to it ; go forth and visit what you have purchased—a burying place for strangers, a field of desolation and death, a place where no order dwelleth, but the shadow of death and everlasting horror.” Indeed the wages of sin is death !

Let us, then, understand aright the character of the two masters between whom we have to make our choice. The one turns all that is bitter into sweet, the other turns all that is sweet into bitter. Let us love and trust our Lord more and more, for He has first loved us. We often rebel at the pressure of the yoke of Christ, and feel disappointed at some of our Lord’s arrangements ; let us then hold fast, and distrust ourselves, ready for Christ’s sake to lose our lives, that in the day of the Lord we may find them again, rich in merit for eternity, having by our obedience and generous sacrifice purchased for ourselves a mansion in our Father’s house, to be our resting-place amid friends for ever.

## CHAPTER XXX

### THE FIRST TRIAL OF OUR LORD BEFORE PILATE

"THEN they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the governor's hall. And it was morning ; and they went not into the hall, that they might not be defiled, but that they might eat the Pasch. Pilate therefore went out to them and said : ' What accusation bring you against this Man ?' They answered, and said to him : ' If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up to thee.' Pilate therefore said to them : ' Take Him you, and judge Him according to your law.' The Jews therefore said to him : ' It is not lawful for us to put any man to death ; that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which He said, signifying what death He should die'."

We may well suppose that Pilate approached this matter with a perfectly open mind. Probably he was in favour of our Lord, and more vexed than usual with the Jews for creating a disturbance in Jerusalem so near the great Sabbath-day, when the city was full of people from all parts. Our Lord cannot have been unknown to Pilate, at least by repute, and His entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday would have been reported to him, and perchance he had even seen the procession with his own eyes. It was therefore with some feeling of irritation and surprise that he

faced the Jews, and asked : "What accusation bring you against this Man ?" It was a clear, definite question, and deserved a clear and definite reply. But the reply was most vague : "If He were not a malefactor, we would not deliver Him up to thee." Pilate would never accept a charge of that kind, and saw at once the maximum measure of guilt that could be laid at our Lord's door. He quickly detected it to be at most a matter of Jewish law, and felt what later on Gallio felt concerning the charges of the Jews against St. Paul : "If it were some matter of wrong, or an heinous deed, O ye Jews, it would be reasonable I should bear with you : but if they be questions of a word, and of names, and of your law, look you to it : I will not be judge of such matters. And Gallio drove them from the judgment-seat." (Acts xviii). It would have been well had Pilate done the same. The Jews, too, quickly grasped the attitude of Pilate's mind, and saw the issue on which the affair depended as far as he was concerned. They therefore at once said it was matter for a death-sentence, and owned that they had to have recourse to Pilate in things of this kind. "It is not lawful for us," they had to confess, "to put any one to death," and, seeing that some definite charge must be made, "they began to accuse Him," (as St. Luke says), "saying, 'We have found this Man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that He is Christ the King.' " There was no truth in any of these three charges, but they were of a kind that would appeal to Pilate. Their real accusation against our Lord was one of blasphemy, which would not have interested Pilate at all, as they well knew. So at once they changed their ground, and accused our Lord of treason, saying : "this Man says he is Christ the King." Then Pilate asked Him,

saying, "Art Thou the King of the Jews ?" and our Lord answered : "Thou sayest it." "And when He was accused by the chief priests and ancients, He answered nothing. Then Pilate saith to Him : Dost not Thou hear how great testimonies they allege against Thee ? And He answered him, too, never a word : so that the governor wondered exceedingly."

Up till now, Pilate had been outside the hall of his house, for the Jews would not go into that hall for fear of being in some way defiled, and so unable to eat the Pasch. But now, as St. John tells us, he "went into the hall again," anxious to probe the matter more carefully. "And he called Jesus, and said to Him, 'Art Thou the King of the Jews ?'" It was as though he would say : "Can it really be that You, a poor and apparently friendless Man, and very unpopular with Your own people, can it really be that You are the King of the Jews ? Perhaps You mean the Friend of the Jews ? but surely not their King ?" There is both astonishment and scorn in Pilate's question. Our Lord had answered it once, and when it is now repeated, He fairly astonished Pilate by putting him on the defensive : "Sayest thou this thing of thyself," said our Lord, "or have others told it thee of Me ?" thereby implying the further question : "Who are those others ? Tell me the names of those on whose information you rely."

The words were an appeal to Pilate's sense of justice —the only appeal that could possibly have any weight with him. The words were a great grace conceded to Pilate by our Lord, and one that ought to have changed the course of events, and coloured all the subsequent proceedings. It was as though our Lord said : "I am charged with making myself a King, or trying to oust others from their earthly thrones and positions, of drawing followers after Me with a view

to undermining the allegiance of others to their lawful sovereigns. I ask you one question, Pilate : in the three years that I have been going about teaching, during the whole of which you have been governor of Judaea, have I ever said or done anything that made you uneasy about Me, or suspicious of Me ? Have you ever felt, in these three years, that I was a dangerous person who ought to be put under arrest ? Have you ever feared lest I should oust you from your position, and reign in your stead ? Do you really believe there is the smallest foundation for this charge ? You did not make it yourself, others have made it against Me, and who are they ? Bring them in, and let the matter be probed before all, but do not formulate a charge for which you know there is no foundation.” So spoke our Lord, but Pilate had not the moral courage to accept the grace offered to him. He ought to have postponed the trial, if trial there was to be at all, and have had the matter properly investigated. Already he had “wondered exceedingly” at the silence of our Lord, and to wonder is to think. But instead, he lost his temper, and became rude and abusive. “Am I a Jew ?” he said to our Lord. How utterly weak and absurd was the question ! Did he look like a Jew ? Was he dressed like a Jew ? Was the cut of his face and features that of a Jew ? No, the question was one of an angry, proud man. “Am I a Jew ?” he cried out, “thy own nation (with a tone of contempt and hatred) and the chief priests have delivered Thee up to me. What hast Thou done ?” Strange question indeed for a judge to put to a prisoner ! “What hast Thou done ?”—yet precisely the same as the one put to our Lord by the Jewish Council—another attempt to make our Lord incriminate Himself.

Our Lord made no reply to this question, for “He

seeks not His own glory," (St. John viii, 50), and when He spoke it was as though He said : "Let us keep to the point you first raised ; you asked Me about My being a King ; I have told you I am a king, and now I tell you further that My Kingdom is not of this world. If My Kingdom were of this world, my servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews : but now My Kingdom is not from hence." Pilate therefore said to Him : "Art Thou a king then ?" or rather, "So it *is* true that Thou art a King ?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a King. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice."

This last sentence was again a grace to Pilate, for it reminded him of the position he held, and that as judge in matters of life and death he ought to be sure of his facts, and not be influenced by feelings and impressions and popular clamour. But again he rejected the grace, and answered with an impatient, scoffing question. "What is truth ?" and "when he had said this, he went forth again to the Jews and said to them : "I find no cause in Him,"—the words of a judge in a matter of life and death, a strong assertion of complete innocence, that ought once and for all to have closed the matter.

Indeed the trial was practically at an end, and the hopes of the Jews seemed frustrated, unless they now make a further effort, and produce fresh charges. So far they have only said that our Lord was a malefactor, and desired to be a King ; they have offered nothing in the way of proof ; have they nothing further in reserve ? Yes, they have, and here St. Luke helps us to understand the full history of what now took place. "They were *more* earnest," he says, "say-

ing, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judaea (Palestine), beginning from Galilee to this place.” The word “Galilee” slipped out, and Pilate heard it, and at once saw a way out of any difficulty for himself that might yet remain. “And Pilate hearing of Galilee, asked if the man were a Galilaean. And when he understood that He belonged to Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent Him away to Herod, who himself was also at Jerusalem in those days.”

Pilate had no right to act thus ; it was a distinct display of weakness. He was perfectly satisfied as to the innocence of our Lord, and ought there and then to have dismissed the Jews in shame and confusion, and set our Lord free. But they must have said something to him to the effect that at least they would like to take their Prisoner to Herod, and Pilate weakly gave way. He was the enemy of Herod, and had no inclination to do anything to please him ; but he had, as we know, reason to ingratiate himself a little with the Jews, and therefore probably allowed them still to keep our Lord a prisoner, and take Him for further trial before Herod.

Now this does but emphasise the wisdom and mercy of our Lord’s way of meeting Pilate from the first. Our Lord “knew what was in man,” and “became all things to all men, that He might gain all,” and in dealing with Pilate He appealed to the one thing by which He could influence him for good, namely, his conscience, his sense of justice. This was the great grace our Lord gave Pilate from the first, but Pilate refused it, and “loving the praise of men more than the praise of God,” he “hardened his foolish heart,” and tampered with principle, and began to try expedients, and, as one by one these expedients failed, involved himself in difficulties from which he was at last powerless to escape.

We cannot indeed be certain of the spirit in which Pilate said to our Lord "What is truth ?" So much depends on the *way* in which things are said ; but we may be morally certain that it was in a contemptuous spirit, and so he waited for no reply. "What is truth ?" said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer. Pilate was a man of some education and literary attainments ; he had read philosophy, and was acquainted with law ; he had at least some appreciation of his position in Jerusalem. He was soon impressed by our Lord, and knew he was dealing with no ordinary person, but he was a sceptic. He denied, as all sceptics do, that truth has any objective existence. Truth, they say, is nothing external to, or independent of, the mind which contemplates it. They "count it a bondage to fix a belief," and love to make the human mind a law to itself, the framer of its own stock of truths, instead of seeing that Truth is a Lord controlling the mind. Their theory flatters human pride, and finds many adherents in every age ; it saps the roots not only of Faith, but also of Morality, for the Good, the Fair, the Right, are all of them forms and departments of the True, and if there be no Truth, men may choose their course of conduct as they please. There is no longer any obligation to obey a law of right and wrong ; there is no sin, and there can be no virtue ; utility becomes the one controlling force to keep society together. So when our Lord spoke to Pilate of truth and its claims, he merely said, "What is truth ?" and thus swept away the scruples he felt, and sought to calm the uneasiness of his conscience. He would not face the problem, for he knew that our Lord had opened the subject of all others which it was his determination to avoid. A right answer to it would change his whole line of

conduct, and that was far more than he was ready to undertake, and so, with a contemptuous question, he brushed the matter aside, and "went out!" "The light of the world shone in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."

The very thought of things being true, especially in the sphere of religion, and therefore of having a binding and compelling force, influencing our lives, stirring our consciences, and endowing us with responsibility, terrifies many, and so they turn away from it, and the best they can say of our Lord is to repeat the words of Pilate: "I find no cause in Him, I see no particular objection so to act." "Man is the measure of the universe," they cry, reiterating the saying of an ancient philosopher. No, God is the measure of the universe, and God loves Truth, for it is the reflection of Himself. God wills all men to come to the knowledge of the Truth, and means are provided by which the bread of Truth may be their daily food. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall never pass away, for they are true. Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice."

We may learn the value of a first grace where our Lord is concerned. "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." Pilate resisted the first grace given him by our Lord, and the second grace never could reach him. It was a grace to bid him *think*, and listen to his conscience, and be true to himself. As St. Paul treated with Felix "of justice, and chastity, and of the judgment to come,"—the only subjects on which he could deal with him to any good purpose—and as Felix replied, "for this time go thy way, but when I have a convenient time I will send for thee"—so did our Lord treat with Pilate on the one point on which

He could help him, but Pilate dismissed the subject with contempt, and would not discuss it further, and the "convenient time" to do so never returned. "Let not mercy and truth leave me: put them about my neck : write them in the tables of my heart, and I shall find grace and good understanding before God and men."

## CHAPTER XXXI

### THE DREAM OF PILATE'S WIFE

“AND as Pilate was sitting in the place of judgment, his wife sent to him, saying : ‘Have thou nothing to do with that just man ; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.’” It is clear from the sacred narrative that Pilate from the very first was much impressed by our Lord, and not at all inclined to grant the Jews the condemnation of Him which they so strongly desired. “Pilate knew that they had delivered Him up through envy,” and our Lord’s absolute silence beneath the assault of the charges laid against Him had struck Pilate forcibly. Indeed, reserve and self-possession under such an ordeal were the last things he had been wont to look for in a Jew. “The governor wondered exceedingly,” says St. Matthew, and to wonder was to admire, and to admire was to think. Hence when a strange message reached Pilate from his wife in the heat of the first trial, he must have been the more inclined to give heed to it.

It is a strange incident, recorded only by St. Matthew, and that very briefly. The bare fact and substance of the message are told in one short verse, but nothing is said how Pilate received it, or of what effect it had upon him. He was actually “sitting in

the place of judgment" when the messenger arrived. No judge who is investigating an important case of life and death should ever be disturbed, and it was perhaps only from his wife that at such a time Pilate would receive any message. "Have nothing to do with that just man," so it ran, the words are strong and urgent in their tone, they form almost a command, an earnest warning, sent in the nick of time, as she probably thought : "Have thou nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him."

The message was an additional grace for Pilate, to whose sense of justice our Lord had so strongly appealed from the first. His position was quite unassailable, and he could only be influenced by the Jews in so far as he chose to be so. Rightly therefore in this message is the "justice" of our Lord insisted upon, and the very sound of the word "just" ought to have righted Pilate's mind, and helped him to waver no more, but to close the case quickly and finally. In some strange way, as in a dream, our Lord had come across Claudia Procla, for so she is now known, perhaps for the first time, with the result that she had "suffered many things." That is always the result, when infinite holiness comes in contact with what is sinful and corrupt. The issue will be pain, before it results in glory. Our Lord is the corner stone that either bruises or grinds to powder, according as He is welcomed or resisted, but in either case pain is the result, for our Lord must influence all, and change all He touches. He comes for our fall or for our resurrection ; He is ever armed with a cross, and ever asks us to renounce self, to become as little children, to walk in the narrow way circumspectly, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

But all the pain is inflicted in love, all has first been endured with love by Him who demands the sacrifice, all is sweetened because it is foretold, all is beautified because, though a consequence of our perverseness, our very care and restoration are made meritorious of eternal good. We are to reign with Christ, and must first suffer for Him and with Him ; this is the law both for the Lord and for His servant, since the servant is not above his Lord.

But our Lord does not wish us to suffer in a dream, for He has told us to watch, and those who dream suffer most and to no purpose. Who are the dreamers ? They are those who are half-hearted in the service of our Lord. "They are such stuff as dreams are made of, and their little life is rounded with a sleep." They dream perchance of doing more for God in the future—dreams that are "the children of an idle brain, begot of nothing but vain phantasy": and "they suffer many things" in consequence. They are those who cling to some habit of sin and neglect, and are not true to themselves. They refuse to regard life as a time of serious but most interesting training for eternity, and dream that more is asked than they can give, that they are not equipped for their task, and all the while our Lord is passing before them, and they "suffer many things in their dream because of that just Man." If they would but rouse themselves from sleep, and walk worthy of their vocation, they would find how much they are needed for work in the vineyard of the Lord, that they "can do all things in Him who strengthens them, and the peace of Christ which surpasses all understanding, would keep their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." But too often the Master "cometh and findeth them sleeping." Their awakening is in Eternity : and they say, when too late, "I

have dreamed, I have dreamed." (Jer. xxiii, 25). "How are they brought to desolation ? they have suddenly ceased to be : as the dream of them that awake." (Ps. lxxii, 19).

"The lost days of my life until to-day,  
What were they, could I see them on the street  
Lie as they fell ? Would they be ears of wheat  
Sown once for food but trodden into clay ?  
Or such spilt water as in dreams must cheat  
The throats of men in Hell who thirst alway ?  
I do not see them here : but after death  
God knows I know the faces I shall see,  
Each one a murdered self, with low last breath,  
I am thyself :—what hast thou done to me ?"

But why did Claudia Procla content herself with sending a messenger to her husband ? why did she not go herself, and see for herself all that was going on ? The saints tell us that in her dream she saw the whole life of our Lord, His early years, His public life, and now His Passion, and that she understood that He really was the Messiah, "the expected of all nations," "the Just One," God and Lord of all, the Saviour of men, treading the winepress alone in order to conquer sin and win eternal life for men. If so, the call was great enough for her to bestir herself, and follow up the light vouchsafed to her. How much more she might have effected ! how much did she lose by her want of activity ! She would have seen our Lord, and "maybe when she saw Him, she would have reverenced Him" : she would have seen our Lady, and perchance have been among her first children. She did not follow up the grace she had received. Dreamers never do much good in the world. If, whilst we have the time, we would do good to all men, if we would be fishers of men, and draw souls to Christ, we must leave all dreams, and

launch out into the deep, and there, and there only, let down our nets for a draught. "Let there be nothing between us and our Lord," else we make Him "our adversary" and not "our friend." "Be at peace with Him whilst we are in the way with Him," that after "the burden and heat of the day" we may go from this life of shadow and dreams to the unfailing light of the day of Eternity—with God.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### OUR LORD BEFORE HEROD

"BUT they were more earnest, saying : He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judaea, beginning from Galilee to this place. But Pilate hearing Galilee, asked if the man were of Galilee. And when he understood that He was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him away to Herod, who was also himself at Jerusalem, in those days. And Herod seeing Jesus, was very glad ; for he was desirous of a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things of Him ; and he hoped to see some sign wrought by Him. And he questioned Him in many words. But He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and the scribes stood by, earnestly accusing Him. And Herod with his army set Him at nought, and mocked Him, putting on Him a white garment, and sent Him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate were made friends together that same day, for before they were enemies one to another." (St. Luke xxiii, 5-12).

We are indebted to St. Luke alone for this account of the trial of our Lord before Herod. The fact that the Jews took our Lord from Pilate to Herod at all, is a confession of how utterly they had failed to achieve the object of their first visit to Pilate, and

of their determination to leave no stone unturned still to attain what they so much desired. They disliked Herod as much as they disliked Pilate, and they had in fact no more hope of gaining the death-sentence from the one than they had from the other. Pilate was guilty of grave weakness in allowing them to take our Lord to Herod at all, and probably it was with a tone of scorn that he gave the leave. "You may take Him, if you like, but his verdict will be the same as mine." But since our Lord *had* been more in Galilee than in Judaea, let Him be brought before the King of Galilee, especially as he happens to be in Jerusalem at this time.

The news of our Lord's arrival at the house of Herod gave him great joy. "For a long time he had been desirous to see Him," so much had he heard of "the wonderful things" done by Him in his domain. The miracles at Capharnaum, at Naim, at Cana—all these and more had reached his ears, and excited his curiosity. "Herod the tetrach heard of *all* things that were done by Him; and he was in a doubt because it was said by some, that John the Baptist was risen from the dead, but by other some, that Elias had appeared; and by others, that one of the old prophets was risen again. And Herod said: John the Baptist I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things? And he sought to see Him." (St. Luke ix, 7-9). And now most conveniently they are both in Jerusalem, and Herod is told that our Lord is at the door. There stood the Lamb of God, "unspotted and undefiled" before Herod, the murderer of St. John the Baptist, a man whose life was full of "the unfruitful deed of darkness which must not be named, for it is a shame even to speak of them—an evil man who out of an evil treasure bringeth forth evil things—a sensual

man who perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God, for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined—an adulterer, who for the folly of his heart shall destroy his own soul—walking in the vanity of his mind, having his understanding darkened, alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart, who despairing, has given himself up to lasciviousness, unto the working of all uncleanness, unto covetousness ; without affection, without peace, incontinent, unmerciful, without kindness, a lover of pleasure more than of God.”

Apparently, from the sacred narrative, Herod at once addressed himself to our Lord, with many words of flattery and assurances of friendly interest, before he listened to any accusations against Him on the part of the Jews. They may wait, for he has at length found the object of his search. Herod would speak of Galilee and of Nazareth, of our Lord’s prolonged sojourn in those parts ; he would assure our Lord of how he had for long wished to see Him, because of his being profoundly impressed by all he had heard of Him ; he would further declare his distress at seeing Him in so pitiable a plight, so marked with bruises and stains of blood, so disfigured by blows, so weary and friendless. Perchance he even asked who it was that had thus ill-treated Him during the previous night, and would the more earnestly impress upon Him his readiness to befriend Him, nay, his power to befriend Him, if only He would now work “some miracle” before his eyes. So the interview was prolonged, and valuable time, as the Jews would think, was wasted. “Herod questioned Jesus with many words”—persuasive words, flattering words, entreating words—“but

Jesus answered him nothing," for "what concord can Christ have with Belial? what participation hath justice with injustice? what fellowship hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. vi, 14, 15).

Herod is the only judge before whom our Lord was brought to whom He spoke never a word. With Pilate He had already spoken much, for He would help him, and had found a road by which to do so. And He would help Herod too, but Herod must open the channel for some light to reach his soul, whereas he was steeped in sins which, more than any other, "hate the light and love darkness." "The eye of the adulterer observeth darkness, saying: No eye shall see me; and he will cover his face. He diggeth through houses in the dark, and they have not known the light. He that is an adulterer gathereth to himself shame, and dishonour, and his reproach shall not be blotted out." How can our Lord influence such a soul? What grace more powerful, what teacher more eloquent and persuasive, can be employed than a silence unbroken and stern? Herod may be made to think, as he feels the power of our Lord's absolute silence. If one with our Lord's reputation is thus silent, refusing all offers of help, discarding all invitations, turning a deaf ear to all questions, when to speak would surely be all to His gain, there must be a reason for it—so Herod might say to himself. And he might devise some reason to explain it. His conscience might thus be aroused, and Herod find the one instrument of his conversion in the silence of our Lord, while words would certainly be wasted, and only lead to further argument and further sin. Our Lord indeed "knew what was in man." "There is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak," and on the first Good Friday the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, who by a look

has given grace to St. Peter, and by His patience will convert the Penitent Thief, now by His silence offers to Herod the grace to face his life and acknowledge his sin, and obey the warnings which St. John the Baptist had so often given him before : "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." Indeed the grace of God is "manifold !" But Herod "counted his life a pastime, and the business of life to be gain, and that we must be getting every way, even out of evil." And so at length Herod gave up all hope of making our Lord either act or speak, and, turning to those who had brought Him, bids them speak, if they have aught to say. "And the chief priests and the scribes stood by earnestly accusing Him." They would be encouraged by the irritation of Herod at our Lord's silence, and feel that their complaints might thus have the greater weight. What they said is not recorded, but the wording of the sacred narrative implies a copious flow of words—charge after charge being hurled against our Lord, with all the eloquence and fervour that they could command. It was their great chance, and they must make the most of it. They have failed before Pilate ; they must not fail again now. Yet so it was, for there was no thought of a death sentence in Herod's mind, and this alone would satisfy the Jews.

"You saw the man was mad ; why have you brought Him to me ? Have we need of madness that you have brought in this fellow to play the madman in my presence ?" said Herod (I Kings, xxi). "The wicked loathe them that are in the right way." But the chief priests and scribes reply : "We beseech thee that this man may be put to death, for on purpose he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of the people, for this man seeketh not peace to this

people, but evil." (Jer. xxxviii). But Herod will be troubled no further. He has lost all interest in the case ; he is disappointed in our Lord, and perhaps compares Him to St. John the Baptist, who spoke to him so much, while our Lord had uttered never a word. Yet, before actually dismissing Him, Herod will take a paltry revenge on Him who has refused to entertain him by a miracle. So "with his soldiers he despised Jesus, and mocked Him, putting on Him a white garment." "The rich man spoke, and all held their peace, and what he said they extol even to the clouds." All gladly join in "setting our Lord at nought," even as the world does to the Church of Christ in every age. She is ever on her trial before Herod, before a world steeped in impurity and love of pleasure. The world must needs take note of her, but ever wishes to see "some sign wrought by her." "Unless it sees signs and wonders, it will not believe," yet "if it will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither if one rise from the dead will it believe." There were signs in abundance for Herod to see, if he would, but "having eyes, he did not see." The very silence of our Lord was a miracle, had he regarded it aright. So when the world approaches the Church of Christ, they see a sign indeed, a standing miracle, but they are blind, and will not acknowledge it. Her very existence is a marvel that cannot be explained by any human theories. Her history is a miracle, an unbroken record of glorious deeds and patient labour. "By her fruits you may know her," but because these are in some measure hidden, or because they are day by day the same, the scoffing, infidel world says, "we would see a sign from thee," and fresh "signs shall not be given it." Therefore "Herod and his soldiers," the world and its dupes, "despise and mock" our Lord and His

Church, which bids men be “wise unto sobriety, not more wise than it behoveth to be wise.” “Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.”

“And Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate; and Herod and Pilate were made friends together that same day, for before they were enemies one to another.”

Herod had not as much right to send our Lord back to Pilate, as Pilate had a right to send Him to Herod. At least Pilate could say that our Lord did in a measure belong to Herod’s jurisdiction, and so it might be well, if He is to be tried at all, for Him to be tried by the tetrarch of Galilee. But Herod had no reason, save careless indifference, to send our Lord for any further trial. If He is a fool, an object of mere pity and derision, let Him go free, for He can harm no one. The miraculous powers attributed to Him are clearly a fable and non-existent; already He has been shockingly maltreated; He is weak with hunger and thirst; He is weary from want of sleep; and now that you have laughed Him to scorn, surely you will set Him at liberty, and allow Him, if you care to do so, to wear the white garment of a fool, of one who has bidden for popular favour, but has singularly failed to gain it. But “Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate,” bound no doubt with the fetters as before, and bearing the garment of a fool.

“And Jesus was silent!”

“Why is earth and ashes proud? Why do we justify ourselves before men, and rejoice in our arrogancies?” “He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled with it. Know ye not that the friendship of this world is the enemy of God?” “Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God. Blessed are the undefiled in the way who walk in the law of the

Lord. Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the chair of pestilence. The innocent shall be saved, and he shall be saved by the cleanliness of his hands."

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### THE SECOND TRIAL OF OUR LORD BEFORE PILATE

"AND [Herod] sent Him back to Pilate."

We can only conjecture the feelings of Pilate on being disturbed for the second time within the space of a few hours by the Jewish priests and magistrates. Certainly he thought, even as he hoped, that when he sent our Lord to Herod, after his definite declaration that he "found no cause in Him," he had finally done with the matter. But the Jews are soon back again from Herod, perchance with a letter from Herod to Pilate, saying he had found our Lord a mere fool, and had been greatly disappointed in Him, but certainly He was in no way "worthy of death." So Pilate came forth once more to the Jews, and in the words which he now addressed to the priests and people, there is a distinct note of irritation even as they are very formal and authoritative.

" This case ought to be dropped once and for all ; you have no real cause for complaint against this Man, and you are asking for a punishment quite out of proportion with the charge you make against Him. I am ready to have Him corrected, for there may be *some* truth in what you say, so He shall be scourged, and that will prevent Him from 'stirring up the people,' or 'perverting the people,' either here or in Galilee, for some little time at any rate."

Now, we know from history that Pilate at this time was on the verge of the disgrace that ultimately led to his deposition and exile. Charges were being laid against him at Rome, and he had been guilty of many excesses of cruelty and outrage in reference to the Jews. "He had mingled the blood of Galilaeans with their sacrifices" (St. Luke xiii, 2), and this is but one specimen of his deeds. It is therefore quite possible that Pilate saw in our Lord a means of currying favour with the Jews, and thus, perchance, of preventing their speaking against him. "They seem," he would say to himself, "really to wish this Man to be punished; there may be good grounds for such a wish, though I must not have Him put to death. So I will chastise him severely, and that will keep Him quiet for a time, and satisfy their hatred of Him, and so the matter will blow over. The Jews will at least feel that I have done them a good turn, and they may do me one in return." So "calling together the chief priests, and the magistrates, and the people, Pilate said to them: You have presented unto me this Man, as one that perverteth the people; and behold, I, having examined Him before you, find no cause in this Man, in those things wherein you accuse Him. No, nor Herod neither, for I sent you to him, and behold, nothing worthy of death is done to Him. I will chastise Him, therefore, and release Him."

It is St. Luke alone who thus first mentions Pilate's giving way to the demands of the Jews, and his cruel, unfeeling intention of seeking to pacify them by this brutal punishment. And the holy writer is careful to record the very word used by Pilate, which tells us exactly his mind with regard to the chastisement, and "the measure of the stripes." It was to be a "correction," not a Roman scourging

in the full and awful sense of the word, such as eventually it proved to be. It was an expedient, and though the pain would be awful, and the humiliation extreme, our Lord would live through it, and soon it would be over and forgotten, and once more He would be able "to go about doing good." But the Jews desired His *death*, and were determined to accept nothing else, and though the sacred narrative gives us no definite information as to how this first proposal of Pilate was received, we may gather from its silence that it availed nothing, and Pilate quickly saw that he must find yet another expedient, if possible, to appease them. Fortunately, as he would think, there was one ready to hand, for he is reminded of Barrabas, "a notorious prisoner," "a man of sedition, a murderer, and a robber." "Surely such a man will solve my difficulty, for it is beyond belief that they can prefer him to Jesus of Nazareth."

"Now on the festival day he was wont to release unto them one of the prisoners, whomsoever they demanded. And there was one called Barabbas, who was put in prison with some seditious men, who in the sedition had committed murder. And when the multitude was come up, they began to desire that he would do, as he had ever done unto them. And Pilate answered them, and said : 'Will you that I release to you the King of the Jews ?' For he knew that the chief priests had delivered Him up out of envy. But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas to them."

It thus appears from the sacred narrative that the idea of obtaining release from prison for Barabbas at our Lord's expense came first from the chief priests, not from Pilate. The old custom, the origin of which is not too certain, was in vogue, and the people needed little or no encouragement to ask that it

should again be observed. Indeed St. Luke says that "of necessity" Pilate *had* to grant the release. "They therefore being gathered together, Pilate answered them and said, "Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas (yes, he is put first) or Jesus, Who is called Christ?" The people had previously been worked upon "by priests and ancients," and persuaded to ask for Barabbas; and they replied, "Away with this Man, and release unto us Barabbas."

There was a determination and unanimity in the cry which Pilate could not but feel intensely. Clearly the less he now says about Barabbas the better, for the expedient has wholly failed, and it is the second in quick succession that has done so. Pilate is becoming impatient, and more and more involved. But he still "desires to release Jesus," as St. Luke tells us, and so he says to the Jews : "What shall I do then with Jesus that is called Christ?" Can any question more weak or less pertinent be imagined? A judge forsooth appeals to the accusers of another to tell him what course he is to pursue! He knew well what he ought to do, but he has tampered with principle, and already been untrue to conscience, and now finds himself the absolute victim of those he could so well have silenced. To ask *them* to dictate or suggest to him his proper course of action was surely to degrade his office and himself in their eyes—a confession of powerlessness which would embolden them to put no limit to their subsequent demands. And this in fact is precisely what took place, for their answer was a request not only for the death of our Lord, but for His death by crucifixion. They were bare-faced and impudent enough (and the weakness of Pilate had encouraged them so to be) to state even

the manner of His death ! “He is to be obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.”

“What shall I do, then, with Jesus that is called Christ ?” They all say, “Let Him be crucified.” As Jews, who had a special horror of this form of capital punishment, they ought at least to have refrained from demanding that it be inflicted on one of their own nation. Yet their request was made deliberately, unanimously, and repeatedly. “Away with this Man ; He has come unto His own, but His own have despised and rejected Him ; let Him be crucified.”

“Pilate said to them (again) : Why what evil hath He done ? But they cried out the more, saying, Let Him be crucified.” It was an answer that closed all further debate as to the course to be pursued. Pilate’s question was ignored, and received no reply. Had he asked, “Why, what *good* hath He done ?” instead of “what evil hath He done ?” presumably the answer would have been the same. The Jews began to feel quite confident of success, for they were conscious that they had contrived to get Pilate fully under their control. They could now ask for what they pleased, and obtain it, and therefore they will go to the utmost limit, and our Lord shall die the death of a malefactor—the name they had first used of Him to Pilate. “He is accursed of God that hangeth on a tree.”

But now a further thought came to Pilate, and gave him some faint hope of avoiding the crucifixion. He still “desired to release” our Lord, and when for the second time the Jews demanded crucifixion, Pilate remembered that crucifixion implied a previous scourging, and moreover that he had already strongly urged, nay had been the first to suggest, that our Lord should be “corrected” in that way. So at

the eleventh hour, he renewed his suggestion, and "said to the Jews" the *third* time, "Why, what evil hath this Man done? I find no cause of death in Him" (certainly not of crucifixion; but as you desire crucifixion, and as before He is thus treated, He must be scourged), "I will chastise Him (as I told you before) and let Him go."

It may have been the addition of this last phrase that caused the last proposal of Pilate now to be strongly and indignantly rejected by the Jews. Had he omitted those words, "Let Him go," Pilate might have carried his point; but for our Lord to be once more free, was out of the question, and so "they were *instant* with *loud* voices (how their effrontery and malice have grown all through the trial), *requiring* (!) that He might be *crucified*."

But Pilate was at least determined to try the awful expedient he had already twice suggested. The "voices of the Jews have really prevailed," but there shall be a delay before they are assured of their victory, and that delay is filled by the scourging of our Lord at the pillar.

"*Then*, therefore, Pilate took Jesus, and scourged Him." The very wording of this phrase from St. John's narrative (who here, as so frequently helps us to follow the exact sequence of events) suggests the determination of Pilate to try this cruel expedient and his hopeful assurance to himself, that it will produce the desired result. Therefore it is to be inflicted, not as a preliminary to crucifixion, but with the distinct purpose of avoiding any further punishment; therefore also it shall be specially severe and terrible.

Thus did the second trial of our Lord before Pilate end. It would now be about nine o'clock in the morning of the first Good Friday, and the Scripture shall be fulfilled: "I am ready for

scourges : and my chastisement hath been in the morning."

"The Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful, and will withdraw himself from thoughts that are without understanding, and he shall not abide when iniquity cometh in." (Wisd. 1, 5). Thou sayest : "I am rich, and made wealthy, and I have need of nothing ; and thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me gold fire-tried, that thou mayest be made rich ; and mayest be clothed in white garments, that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear ; and anoint thy eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." (Apoc. iii., 17, 18). "Know you not that a little leaven corrupteth the whole lump ? Purge out the old leaven that you may be a new paste, as you are unleavened. For Christ our Pasch is sacrificed. Therefore let us feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (I Cor. v, 6-8).

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### THE SCOURGING AT THE PILLAR

THERE are scenes in the life of our Lord, so beautiful or so full of awe, that Holy Scripture makes no attempt to give us even an outline of them, still less to describe them. Such, for example, is the hidden life of our Lord at Nazareth ; such too is the Scourging at the pillar. This scene is simply dismissed in one short sentence : "then Pilate took Jesus, and scourged Him." One further attempt to describe it is indeed made by St. Mark, who says that our Lord was "cut to pieces with lashes," (*flagellis caesum*), but as to the reality and atrocity of the scene, it is left to our imagination, and for the use of that imagination we have but slight material. We know from history the brutality of scourgings in the case of criminals destined for execution, so that not unfrequently they are said to have died under the lash. Moreover, our Lord's sacred flesh was more than usually sensitive, so that St. Bernard says it was as sensitive as the eye, and by reason of the perfection of His human nature, His capacity of feeling pain was far in excess of ours. Also we should remember that the scourging was intended to be *unusually* severe, for it was to be an expedient for procuring the release of our Lord from death. Had Pilate said to the soldiers, in the

words of Holy Writ, "Make Him a worm, and no man," he would have accurately expressed what he desired to be done.

In all the predictions of His Sacred Passion which our Lord deigned to make to His chosen disciples, we find mention of the scourging He was to undergo, as holding a special place in His mind. Nor is there any incident of the Sacred Passion more frequently named in Prophecy, or more vividly portrayed. We are to be bought with a great price, and practically the whole of that price is paid in this terrible scene, for it was endured to atone for that sin which quicker than any other separates men from God, and makes them demons rather than angels, and which includes in its grasp the great majority of the evil here below. "All that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 St. John ii, 16). Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, lust, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is the service of idols. For which things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of unbelief." (Col. iii, 5, 6). Already those "deeds of darkness, which must not be named," those sins of shame, had brought great punishment on the world; "the thought of men's hearts was bent on evil," and it "repented God that He had made man, for all flesh has corrupted its way upon the earth." The earth was so filled with inquiry of this kind, that God "brought the waters of a great flood upon the earth to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life." And now again "a great flood shall be poured upon the earth," a flood of the Precious Blood, not to destroy, but to redeem, and to save.

It was the hands of His own Mother that first had

drawn the Precious Blood from the sacred Flesh of our Lord, for she was the Mother of sinners, and on her Immaculate Child she must cast their shadow, since she has been commissioned to fix upon Him a Name which is above every name. He is to be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins, but He cannot bear the name of Saviour without some shedding of His Blood, for "without blood there is no remission of sins." Next it was by His own hands that the Precious Blood was shed, for He designed to enter and pass through the Sacred Passion alone, to tread the winepress alone in His agony, before its time, when all the disorder and malice of sin pressed Him to the ground, the weight intensified by His own love for sinners, and by the ingratitude of men with which that love should be met. Those two forces, "so counter and so keen," forced the Blood from His veins so that it fell in clots upon the ground, and He who thus deigned to act was the most Beautiful among the sons of men.

But now the storm must burst in its fulness, and the battle be fought in the open; and at the Scourging and Crowning with thorns, on the road to Calvary, and until the head is bowed in death on the Cross, the Blood shall flow, with never a check, until its last drop is poured forth by the piercing of the Sacred Heart with a lance. It is consummated, the price is paid to the last farthing. "Why is Thy apparel red, and Thy garments like theirs that tread in the wine-press ?" Because sin is an unutterable evil, because He had loved us with an everlasting love. "Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it ; if a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing for love is strong as death." The destiny of man is so lofty, his degradation so easy, the loss of his eternity

so awful a calamity, that great must be the price paid to secure for him his place in the heavenly Jerusalem. But in that City of God are to be found only the undefiled, the spirits of the just made perfect.—“If, then, I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my tongue cleave to my jaws, let my right hand lose its cunning, if I make not Jerusalem the beginning of my joy.” Such is the mind of our Lord as He is led away “as a lamb to the slaughter, not opening His mouth,” without one word of protest, without one plea for mercy. He is going to pay the price that will make men as Angels, and fill the courts of the Lord with those that are clean of heart.

That great and eternal Future which, from the abundance of God’s riches and bounty has been assigned to the race of Adam, over and above aught that could be its due,—that face to face vision, which is man’s end, had been forfeited, yet its glorious hope could once more be extended to men, to tempt their love, and to direct it to something higher than themselves and the things that can never satisfy. The breach can be healed, the wrath shall be turned away, by the Blood of Jesus Christ which cleanseth us from all sin. “It was impossible that with the blood of oxen and goats sins should be taken away : but Christ, being come an high-priest of the good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is not of this creation, neither by the blood of goats or of calves, but by His own Blood, entered once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of an heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh, how much more shall the Blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered Himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our consciences from dead works,

to serve the living God? Therefore He is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of His death, they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance." The Future is the conquest of the sacred Scourging; the good things to come are its legacy; the greater and more perfect tabernacle, the Church, is the purchase of the Precious Blood, while a "conscience cleansed from dead works to serve the living God" is its demand and its fruit. A robe of innocence has to be bought, on which the eyes of the Eternal Father can look with pleasure, but it can only be made white if it be washed in the Blood of the Lamb. Let, then, the scourges fall, and the thorns be driven in; let the cross press on the shoulders, so sore and wounded, that men may learn the load of accumulated falls, and that every step on the path to victory costs pain. When Calvary is reached, the full price is all but paid, but there is yet one precious pearl to buy, the grace of a happy death. For this the Precious Blood of our Lord shall flow to the last, before His Mother's eyes, as it flowed at Bethlehem, when first she called Him Jesus.

"He is ready for scourges," and "gives His Body to the strikers, and His cheeks to them that plucked them." "His Heart is broken within Him and all His bones tremble," for "He is become sin," and at once meets the sins which are the most numerous of all, and the most deadly, which more than any others destroy all that is noble in man. "These rush upon Him like a giant, and encompass Him with scourges," for "according to the measure of the sin, shall the measure also of the stripes be." His robes are laid aside, and the soldiers have their hour. "Many are the scourges of the sinner," and they "pour out His Blood like water." "He is wounded for our iniquities, and bruised for our sins; the chastisement of our

peace was upon Him. They have wrought upon His back, and from the crown of His head to the sole of His foot there is no soundness in Him : wounds and swelling sores which are not bound up nor fomented with oil."

No pen can describe, no brush can paint, no mind can gauge this scene of the Scourging at the pillar. We do well to follow the beautiful reserve of Scripture, and not attempt the impossible. Yet, as our Lord is led away, and as He endures this humiliation, our thoughts should include the Mother of Sorrows, who heard Pilate order the scourging, who saw her Child taken from her gaze, by rude and infuriated men, who knew what they would do to Him, and she not able to be a witness. Later on she shall see the fruits of this terrible work, but now they are hidden from her eyes, and the very inability to see, the powerlessness to help, drives yet more deep the sword into Mary's soul. "O all ye that pass by the way, stay and see if there be any sorrow like unto mine." It is the anguish of the three days loss repeated and intensified, but "her soul magnified the Lord and her spirit rejoiced in God her Saviour," for in His garden He now is sowing at awful cost the lilies of purity among whom He feeds. Soon the winter will be past, and the rain be over and gone ; soon the flowers will appear in the heavenly country, as the angels and the full assembly of saints "fall down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints," and singing : "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, because Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God in Thy Blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation."

"Grace be to you, and peace be to you, from Him

that is, and that was, and that is to come, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own Blood." Then shall we be inebriated with the plenty of this scene of the sacred Passion, when we are come to Mount Sion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the city of the living God, and to the company of many thousands of angels, and to Jesus the mediator of the New Testament, and to the sprinkling of Blood which speaketh better than that of Abel, and are found to have washed our robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb."

## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE CROWNING WITH THORNS

THE Crowning of our Lord with thorns follows closely on the Scourging at the pillar. The latter may be regarded as our Lord's special atonement for sins of the flesh, but St. John in his summary of the evil of the world, already quoted, besides "the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes," also names "the pride of life," and this source of ruin to souls must now be atoned for, and an object lesson of its evil and destructive power be given by the Crowning of our Lord with thorns. "Pride is hateful before God and men, and the beginning of the pride of man is to fall off from God. Why is earth and ashes proud? Never suffer pride to reign in thy mind, or in thy words: for from it all perdition took its beginning, and every proud man is an abomination to the Lord." "Learn of Me," says our Lord, "because I am meek and humble of heart."

"Then the soldiers of the governor taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto Him the whole band; and stripping Him, they put a scarlet cloak about Him. And plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand. And bowing the knee before Him, they mocked Him,

saying : Hail, king of the Jews. And spitting upon Him, they took the reed and struck His head." This is St. Matthew's account of the scene of the crowning with thorns, and it is very similar to that of St. Mark. In both the sacred writers, the blame and responsibility for this cruel indignity to our Lord is laid wholly on the soldiers. Pilate had never ordered this to be done. But when the scourging was over, the remembrance that our Lord had spoken of Himself as a king seems to have recurred to their minds, or someone reminded them of it, and so the suggestion of making Him a mock king was made, and readily assented to. The very wording of the sacred text suggests a scene of unparalleled violence and wanton cruelty. It is a scene of their own making, and in their eyes it shall be successful indeed. Our Lord is quite alone, the sport of some five or six hundred men, infuriated against Him, loud and coarse in speech, athirst for cruelty, determined that their prisoner shall have his fill of punishment.

First, a king must have a royal robe, therefore strip this Man, and put a scarlet cloak about Him. Next a king must have a crown, and let thorns be quickly woven to make one for Him. We have no time to lose, for Pilate will soon be sending for us. But a king must also have a sceptre, and here is a reed ready for His hand. The picture is complete, and now we may pay Him homage. So they mocked Him, and spat upon Him, and bowed the knee before Him, and said : Hail, king of the Jews. Let us make sure that the crown is firmly fixed on His head ; so strike His head with the reed, that the thorns may pierce the more deeply. "I am become a laughing stock all the day : I am turned in my anguish, while the thorn is fattened." But "when He was reviled, He did not revile ; when He suffered,

He threatened not, but gave His body to the strikers, and His cheeks to them that plucked them. The whole head is sick, the whole heart is sad. Many dogs encompassed Him, and the council of the malignant besieged Him : they looked and stared upon Him : they opened their mouths against Him, as a lion ravening and roaring. He is poured out like water, His heart is becoming like wax melting."

In no scene of the Sacred Passion is our Lord more alone than at His crowning with thorns ; He is alone amid a large number, their sport, the object of their ridicule and mockery, enduring in silence an indignity that had not been predicted, pains that in great measure would be disregarded. The anguish and wounds of the sacred scourging were to plead for His release ; but no one would take notice of the pains of the crown of thorns. Thus are the sins of those who "think themselves to be something, whereas they are nothing" atoned for ; thus does our Lord associate Himself with those who work and suffer in silence, without sympathy, without encouragement, bearing all for His sake, not receiving their reward, "not minding high things but consenting to the humble," "not letting their lips be a stumbling block to them."

The silences of our Lord during the Sacred Passion, which in this scene are arrayed in glory before us, are as beautiful and instructive as His words. The two go together, and by both the gift of speech is equally sanctified, for silence is not the mere absence or failure of speech, but has a positive meaning and power of its own. It is the deliberate suspension of speech, the substitution in human life of the exception for the rule.

When accused by "many false witnesses" before

Caiaphas, the silence of our Lord astonished the high-priest, who "rose up and said : Answerest Thou nothing to the things which these witness against Thee ? But Jesus held His peace."

He was blasphemed, spat upon, struck with the fist, mocked and ridiculed, but never a word of protest ! "As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, so opened He not His mouth." Before Herod, though "questioned with many words, He answered nothing."

How great a part is played in daily life by the use of speech ! And if daily life is to be made holy, if eternity depends on the due performance of the duties of daily life, and if speech enters largely into these, as assuredly it does, then let us take heed to our words, and pray the Lord "to set a watch before our mouth, and a door round about our lips," for "blessed is the man that hath not slipt by a word out of his mouth." It is by speech that we communicate with one another, to cheer, to encourage, to guide. "Well-ordered words are as a honey-comb, sweet to the soul and health to the bones," yet, like every gift of God, speech is misused, and with consequences that are devastating, painful, and lasting. "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing ; by the tongue we bless God and the Father : by the tongue we curse men who are made to the likeness of God," so that though "many have fallen by the edge of the sword, they are not so many as those that have perished by their own tongue."

We may learn the spirit of silence from our Lord crowned with thorns. It is a part of the virtue of humility, for "he who speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory." "By our words we shall be justified, by our words we shall be condemned." We sin by excess of speech, by hastiness in speech, by want of

charity in speech, by words of self-assertion, self-exaltation, self-advertisement ; the phrases "I said," "I did" fill the air with their harsh music, and never sound quite true. And while we guard our words, we must keep watch over the thoughts from which they flow. Our Lord crowned with thorns atoned for sins of thought—impure thoughts, malicious designs, unkind suspicions, rash judgments, desires for revenge, thoughts of jealousy, the wish to give pain. "The heart of the wise shall instruct his mouth, and shall add grace to his lips ; a peaceful tongue is a tree of life."

Lastly, let those draw near to our Lord crowned with thorns whose lot in life is to labour alone, without encouragement or recognition, to suffer alone without sympathy, to live alone without friends, perchance with many around who are hostile and unkind. The solitude of the Sacred Passion is nowhere more marked than in the scene of the crowning with thorns. "I am smitten as grass, and my heart is withered ; I am like a night-raven in the house. I have watched, and am become as a sparrow all alone on the house-top, while all the day long my enemies reproached me." And by the solitude of our Lord, every solitude is blest and sanctified.

There is, first, the solitude of prayer. Did ever a cry of deeper anguish or more earnest appeal arise from any human heart than that cry in the garden on Olivet : "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me, yet not My will but Thine be done?" The contents of the chalice were intimately known, and were all too bitter, yet the plea was refused, no answer was vouchsafed, the heavens were as brass above Him. Often there comes upon us a sense of dryness in prayer of being distanced from our Father

in heaven, whose name we hallow, whose will we desire should be done, whose aid we would call forth. It is our share in the Passion of our Lord, one of the ways by which "we make up what is wanting in the Passion of Christ." Then to remember that in the hours of the sacred Passion our Lord sanctified the solitude of prayer ! From Olivet to Calvary He never ceased to pray; "being in an agony, He prayed the longer," for enemies and for friends.

There is also the solitude of labour. By far the greater part of our work is done alone, unobserved, without help, without recognition, without gratitude ; and the more directly our labour is for God the more truly will this apply, so that to labour for God is but another way of saying to suffer for God. Never did our Lord "work the works of Him who sent Him that such work should be perfected" so fully as during the Sacred Passion. It was the last hour of that fair day of life spent on earth by the most Beautiful among children of men, the day on which from its dawn to its close were inscribed the words : "Not My will, but Thine be done." It was filled with labour, and the labour was pain. No one appreciated what was done, no one applauded, no one gave thanks, but many blasphemed many derided, many mocked, but the labour continued till it was consummated, and the labours and pains of all who work for our Lord and who suffer with Him were thereby sanctified. Those who have not received their reward were specially blest, and the solitude of unrequited toil was made for ever fair.

"Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven, for to whom shall I have respect but to him that is poor and little, and of a contrite heart, and that trembleth at My words ?"

"I will be little in My own eyes, for where humility  
is, there also is wisdom."

"Measure thy life by loss instead of gain :  
Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured forth ;  
For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice ;  
And whoso suffers most has most to give."

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### THE THIRD AND LAST TRIAL OF OUR LORD BEFORE PILATE

AN interval of about an hour and a half elapsed between the second trial of our Lord before Pilate and the third, and it was filled by the Scourging and the Crowning with thorns. The crowd outside the house of Pilate was every minute increasing in size, and becoming more and more determined to have Him put to death. The chief priests so far from being idle during this time, are busily occupied in working up the fury of the people, bidding them be loyal to Moses and the Law, and to reject the Galilaean with scorn. They knew well that the Scourging of our Lord was a mere expedient—an expedient that was to fail of its effect.

The Scourging and Crowning with thorns are now over ; the last brutal lash has fallen on the flesh of our Lord ; the greatest scene in the history of the world is about to begin. Quickly the word would be passed among the crowd that Pilate was again coming forth to them ; and soon he appears. Our Lord is not yet present to their gaze, for Pilate has first some words of introduction to speak. "Behold," he said, eminently satisfied with the success of his arrangements,

"behold I bring Him forth unto you, and I say again that I find no cause in Him."

"Then Jesus came forth, bearing the crown of thorns, and the purple garment!" Our Lord would be close to Pilate, and Pilate could see for himself what had been done in obedience to his commands. Our Lady, too, is present at this scene, and sees what "the chastisement of our peace" implies. Pilate was amazed and bewildered. Cruel man that he was, accustomed to deeds of blood and horror, he had never seen a sight like that, and it put him at a loss for words. He could only say: "Behold the Man," and hope for some expression of pity from those around. But when the chief priests and the officers had seen Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." Pilate was angry, for he has again failed. "Take Him *you* and crucify Him," he said, "for I find no cause in Him." These are the weak words of an angry man, monstrous words, for they lightly shift the responsibility of life and death on to an irresponsible, maddened crowd, which at once made reply: "we have a law, and according to that law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."

The Jews have now entirely changed their ground. No longer is our Lord to die because He disregards the law of Moses, or because He stirreth up the people, or would make Himself a king. He is to die "because He made Himself the Son of God." "When Pilate therefore, had heard *this* saying, he feared the more." He now sees clearly that he has been duped, and led into courses he would never have adopted if this fresh charge (which was a charge of no importance whatever in his eyes) had been made before; so he feared exceedingly. Out of the previous charges he could have found an abundance of material which by

some exaggeration and colouring of the facts he could easily work up into an excellent "case" against our Lord, to be reported to Rome, fully justifying his severity, and deserving (as he might persuade himself), a warm commendation from the authorities in return. But this new charge mattered nothing, and was deserving of no stripes. Had our Lord made Himself the son of Cæsar, there would have been a basis for punishment, but "He made Himself the Son of God," and what did Pilate care for this more than for the problem of the nature of Truth ? Well may he now "fear the more," for he has brought much upon himself. "Wickedness is full of fear, and a troubled conscience forecasteth grievous things."

"Then Pilate entered into the hall again, and said to Jesus, Whence art thou ?" . . . (are you a spirit, or an angel, or some one from the nether world. . . . Tell me what you are, and whence you are ?) "But Jesus gave him no answer !"

Why was this ? There are many kind of silence. There is the silence of fear, the silence of disdain, the silence of sullenness, but this silence of our Lord is none of these. There is also the silence of charity and of instruction, and such again was now our Lord's silence to Pilate. The question of Pilate was neither sincere nor profitable, and an answer to it would have done Pilate no good. Our Lord's silence, as before, was intended to steady Pilate, and to make him think. It should have convinced him, and perhaps it did, that already he had violated his conscience, and acted against light. It was as though our Lord said : "think of what you are doing ; it matters not whence I am : the point is, am I guilty ; am I deserving of the punishment you have inflicted on Me ; am I deserving of the punishment you are now asked to inflict upon Me ?" So "Jesus gave Pilate no answer."

"Pilate, therefore, saith to Him : Speakest Thou not to me ; knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and I have power to release Thee?"—the words of a proud man without feeling, of a man who has been worsted in argument, and dreads another fall. "Jesus answered : Thou shouldest not have any power against Me, unless it were given thee from above : therefore, he that hath delivered Me to thee hath the greater sin." These are words of mercy that offered Pilate the last and appropriate grace he needed. He had violated his conscience and all sense of justice ; what had he left ? Possibly a sense of a God to whom he was responsible, of a "Power above" which had entrusted him with what ever powers he wielded. The Jews have the greater sin in this matter ; but do not, O Pilate, incur the guilt of misusing your power. Look upon it as a trust "from above," for human life is sacred. The words "from above" impressed Pilate, and forced upon him the question : "Doth God pervert judgment, or doth the Almighty overthrow that which is just ?"

For the moment the words of our Lord seemed to produce an effect on Pilate, for we are told that "from henceforth Pilate sought to release Him." We can only conjecture what took place, or what was said, but clearly the Jews perceived that a change had come over Pilate, for he seemed again to delay in granting their oft-repeated petition. A fresh onset must be made ; voices must again be raised, and "they cried out, saying : If thou release this Man thou art not Cæsar's friend, for whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." The spiritual charge of making Himself the Son of God had quickly been abandoned by the Jews, and they have eagerly betaken themselves once more to the

political charges, which they came to see alone had any weight with Pilate.

Another scene in this drama now begins, and the end is very near. "When Pilate had heard these words, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in the place that is called Lithostrotos, and in Hebrew Gabbatha. And it was the Parasceve of the Pasch, about the sixth hour, and Pilate saith to the Jews, behold your King!" But they cried out, "Away with Him, Away with Him, crucify Him."

"Pilate saith to them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but Cæsar.'

"And Pilate, seeing that he prevailed nothing, but that a tumult was made, having taken water, washed his hands before the people, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just Man, look you to it.'

"And all the people, answering, said, 'His blood be upon us and upon our children.'

"So Pilate, being willing to satisfy the people, released to them, Barabbas, and delivered up Jesus to be crucified."

"The end is come, the end is come."

In this scene of the "Ecce Homo" our Lord faces the world for its decision in His regard, and makes His last appeal to men for their love and obedience. It is the final parting of friends, our Lord's turning from the Jews to the Gentiles. "My people, My people," He says, "what have I done to thee, or in what way have I molested thee, answer thou Me?" —a question that embraces the Past, and looks to the Future—"All the day I have spread forth my hands to an unbelieving people, who walked in a way that is not good after their own thoughts, a people that continually provoke me to anger before my face and

eat swine's flesh, and profane broth is in their vessels." Such has been man's treatment of God from the beginning, and God's bearing towards men so dear to Him. It is one long record of the abuse of free will, of the pursuit of self, of the glorification of passion, of the stifling of conscience and the wilful extinction of light : one long record of unrecognised kindness, abused yet expected, and repaid only by perversity. "All the day long,"—words that not only cover a long period, but are expressive of weariness and much labour. They sum up the history of the times before our Lord came—the history of that People, conscious of a special mission, alive to their great privileges, closely and constantly in touch with God, abounding in blessings and in proofs of divine aid and protection, yet even in the best of times half-hearted in their zeal for the cause of God, often idolatrous, and stooping to the very depths of iniquity. Their history is "one long paroxysm of rebellious fury." Nothing seemed to fix them in their allegiance. Their successes intoxicated them, their failures made them sullen ; the great Captivity itself, with the destruction of their City, failed to teach them a lesson. Their men of renown came and went, but Israel was ever unbelieving, a nation that provoked God to anger, yet "all the day long He spread out hands" of generosity and patient love towards them.

Another day dawned ; the Law was supplemented by "grace and truth" ; a great Prophet arose and God visited His people. Shadow gave way to reality, and Jesus of Nazareth is passing by, to give sight to the blind, and strength to the maimed, to heal the broken of heart, to bind up the wounds of them that are bruised. He went about doing good, having compassion on the multitude, receiving

sinners and eating with them. Yet "He is a Samaritan and has a devil, He casts out devils by Beelzebub, He is a glutton and a wine-bibber ; away with Him, away with Him, let His Blood be upon us and upon our children," is the cry of His own to whom He came. He can but sum up the history of His day in the words : "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent to thee : how often would I have gathered thy children together, as the hen doth gather her chickens beneath her wing, and thou wouldest not. All the day long have I spread forth my hands to an unbelieving people, who walk in a way that is not good after their own thoughts."

The fullness of time has come ; the Word has become flesh, and dwelt amongst us, and men may now "see His glory," even as they "look upon Him whom they have pierced." His Church has taken His place, but what has been her history ? It has indeed a glory all its own. It is proof of her divine origin and mission, of the verification of Christ's promises to her that she should never fail, that she should be hated by all and never welcomed, and all the day long she has spread her hands to an unbelieving people that contradict her, and walk in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts. The history of Israel is repeated in the history of the Church of Christ, and she has found those "that continually provoke her" even among her own children. The cause of God does not fail ; our Lord's work and planting are not barren of fruit ; there is much good in the world ; many are saved ; many lead lives of prayer, sacrifice, and reparation ; many suffer with our Lord that hereafter they may reign with Him, yet the appeal of the scene of the "Ecce Homo" is heard to-day most truly : "All the day

long I have spread out my hands to a people that believeth not, and that contradicteth me." "My people, my people, what have I done to thee, or in what have I molested thee ? Answer thou Me."

"Stay with us, Lord, for the day is far spent" : and even at the eleventh hour help us to understand the fidelity and love of Thy last appeal. "Behold the Man" who would draw us to Himself, whose hands are outstretched all the day, until the evening, when they will pay the labourers their hire.

May then the story of what has been done for us by those outstretched hands make our Lord our Saviour rather than our Judge ; may then the appeal of the "Ecce Homo" be found to have reached our hearts, and so to have framed our lives that all the day long we be found to have walked in a way that is good, not after our own thoughts, but after the will of Him who sent us, and who is our Lord and our God, our Saviour and our Friend.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### THE JOURNEY TO CALVARY

"AND after they had mocked Him, they took off the cloak from Him, and put on Him His own garments, and led Him away to crucify Him. And they took Jesus, and led Him forth. And bearing His own cross, He went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha." On one of the last days of His life on earth, standing in the Temple at Jerusalem, our Lord suffered His soul to be troubled, and prayed aloud to His Father to deliver Him from the hour that had arrived (St. John xii, 27). "Unless the grain of wheat fall into the ground and die," He had said, "itself remaineth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life in this world shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall find it"—words prophetic of the ordeal through which He was so soon to pass. He added : "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself." This is the condition of victory, and in its utterance our Lord found consolation. He must be lifted up on high, before men will believe in Him, obey Him, and love Him. This hour in the life of our Lord has now come, for "Pilate, wishing to satisfy the people, has released to them Barabbas, who for murder and sedition had been cast into

prison, whom they had desired, and has delivered up Jesus to be crucified." This probably took place about ten o'clock on the morning of the first Good Friday.

The Preparations for the Crucifixion are quickly made ; the ropes and ladders, the hammers and the nails are got ready, and the executioners instructed as to their work. For our Lord yet further ignominy and pain are in store before He may start on the last journey, for "they took off the purple from Him." This cloak would have absorbed much of the Precious Blood, and become imbedded in the wounds of our Lord's sacred Body caused by the scourging. Every wound would now be re-opened by the rough handling of the soldiers, and the Blood would flow afresh, and entail untold agony to our Lord. Moreover the crown of thorns would be removed before "His own garments" could be put upon Him, for "the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout"; and when they had "put on Him His own garments once more," the crown of thorns would be replaced. "He shall be king over all the earth," and must wear His crown to the end.

These sufferings of our Lord, caused by the changing of His garments, should not be passed over or forgotten. Three times at least He endured this treatment ; first, when after the scourging they put a scarlet cloak about Him in mockery ; again now, when they replaced His own garments for His easier recognition on the way to Calvary ; and thirdly on Calvary itself, before the crucifixion. They are the pains He endured in atonement for the sins of those who wilfully relapse into sin, who make no firm purpose of amendment in confession, who have no intention of avoiding the occasions of sin, and so re-open the wounds which the oil and wine of our

Lord's sympathy and forgiveness had healed. They have the "evil heart of unbelief to depart from the living God, and fall from their own steadfastness." "It had been better for them not to have known the way of justice, than after they had known it, to turn back from that holy commandment which was delivered to them."

And now, when all is ready, "bearing His own cross," our Lord "goes forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha." The distance to be traversed is about a mile, along a rough road, down one incline and up another. The heavy cross trails on the ground, and jolts at every step, and jars the many wounds. A mounted centurion leads the way ; trumpeters proclaim the sentence ; soldiers are there with their coarse jests and laughter ; the priests, too, exulting in their success, the executioners ready for their task—all these meet the eyes of our Lord. Lastly the crowd, large in number, excited and infuriated in mind, repeating again and again their cries : "Away with Him, away with Him ; we will not have this man to reign over us : His Blood be upon us and upon our children."

"His government is upon His shoulder,"—so had Isaias prophesied of Him, and we now may see the verification of his words. Our Lord came to rule, for He is King of kings and Lord of lords ; "out of Bethlehem shall come forth the captain that shall rule My people" ; and His rule is embodied in the cross, which He now welcomes as it is laid upon His shoulder. Never before could He say as now : "if any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." From this moment we are "to know no one but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." "Our eyes now see the King in His beauty," and "till the day break and the shadows

retire, we will go with Him to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense."

No great distance had been traversed when our Lord, as tradition tells us, fell to the ground for the first time beneath the weight of the Cross. Close at hand is a group of three—the Mother undefiled, St. Mary Magdalen the penitent, St. John the disciple whom Jesus loved—and our Lord fell before His Mother's eyes. "Jesus, that He might sanctify the people by His own Blood, is to suffer without the gate, and these have gone forth to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." For thirty years and more the Mother and the Son have been together, and even in death they shall not be divided. "Mother," exclaimed a young soldier, who had been on foreign service, and while there had been stricken down with a malady that had brought him to the brink of the grave, "I am so glad you have come." Whose entrance into his room could have been more sweet; what a ray of joy to know that someone had cared and had travelled far to be of use and give comfort! But that mother broke down at the sight that met her eyes, for she would not have known her boy, nor been able to have singled him out, had he lain among others in some large hospital ward. This incident may help us a little to realise our Lady meeting our Lord with His Cross, yet only a little, for we are here quite out of our depth, and have no instruments with which to fathom such an ocean of sorrow. It is always terrible pain to see friends who have been very ill for the first time. They are so changed from what they were when last we saw them, and the history of the change is written in what meets our eyes. Of a scene, then, such as this we shall say much, and shall yet want words. But what picture is at once drawn before the mind, when friends meet, one of whom is

near to death ? It is the picture of the character of the one who is soon to die—that assemblage of qualities that has endeared him to his friend—every deed and detail in which those qualities have found expression in the past. In human characters, even the best, there is usually something out of proportion, which mars the perfection of the whole, but not so with our Lord. He was all things to all men, drawing them with the cords of love, speaking to them according to their capacity, having compassion upon them, sorrowing with those that mourn, rejoicing with them that could feast, capable of righteous anger and indignation, yet meek and humble of heart, patient with the perverse, always gentle, not crushing the bruised reed, not quenching the smoking flax, but ever falling like rain upon the fleece, and as showers descending gently upon the earth. He went about doing good. "Was not our heart burning within us as He spoke to us in the way ?" said the two disciples after our Lord had met them in the way to Emmaus. Such was the record of their experience. "His conversation hath no bitterness : I will sit down under His shadow whom I desired, for His fruit is sweet to my palate, and grace is poured abroad in His lips." All the peace and sweetness of the years of obedience at Nazareth come to our Lady now, as she meets her Child with His cross. "Why is Thy apparel red, and Thy garments like theirs that tread in the wine press ?" Because "having joy set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame" ; "He grew up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a thirsty ground," but, because He came to seek and to save that which was lost, the day has come when "there is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness."

Our Lord's love for our Lady was so true, yet there are times when the truest friendship inflicts the

sharpest pain. From this meeting our Lady was to grow in wisdom and grace, to become so much, that she must needs taste its bitterness to the full. She is to become the model and the mother of all her children who are to be educated aright for Home, and who never are to meet our Lord save with His Cross. The cross is not always the same in weight and size, but a cross there always is ; and even as when our Lady met our Lord on the road to Calvary there was need of someone to help Him with His load, so as we meet our Lord in life's daily strain and battle, He asks for someone to help Him to bear His cross, to help the Church, His Spouse, to bear her burden, and this we do by bearing what God sends us to bear, as our Lady teaches us to do when she met her Child on the road to Calvary.

They are now outside the city-walls, in view of Mount Calvary, and again and again our Lord falls. How often are souls tempted to turn back in sight of the promised land ! Through many years, through many trials, they have persevered, but when almost within the "embrace of the eternal arms," they fall, they are discouraged, and they turn back. The enemy is stronger than they imagined, the struggle longer and more severe than they anticipated, and when victory is full in view, they cease to fight, and throw away the good they have acquired so laboriously. Indeed our whole lives are mirrored in the journey to Calvary. It is a Via Dolorosa, a way of sorrows. The road is not long, but the cross is on us *all* the way ; we are surrounded by many who think us foolish, who increase our difficulties and our load, who are even cruel at times, but our Lord is with us, and we must "persevere under chastisement, not weary in well doing, confident of this very thing, that He who hath begun a good work in us, will perfect it unto the

day of Christ Jesus." "Therefore be ye steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord, faithful unto death, that we may receive the crown of life." For this grace we should pray every day, that we may not "put our hand to the plough and look back," but persevere to the end, "steadfast in the way of the Lord," for our Lord has said : "If you continue in My word, you shall be My disciples indeed."

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### SIMON OF CYRENE AIDS OUR LORD TO BEAR HIS CROSS

"AND they forced one Simon of Cyrene, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and of Rufus, to take up His cross. And they laid the cross on him, to carry after Jesus." We have in these words the witness of holy Scripture as to the state to which our Lord had been reduced before, "bearing His own Cross, He had gone forth to the place which is called Calvary." Many times over He ought to have succumbed to His wounds and pain ; the scourging alone would have killed many men, had it been shared by a number, so too the crown of thorns ; but "having loved His own that were in the world, He would love them to the end," to the extremity of infamy and anguish, and so He prolonged His life, and enlarged His powers of suffering, that His proof of love might be the greatest." "My knees are weakened through fasting ; My steps have slipped in the way of our streets ; I was weary, and no rest was given Me ; My skin is withered and drawn together ; My sorrow hath oppressed Me, and all My limbs are brought to nothing ; My bones are dried up with weeping, My eyelids are dim, My end draweth near." Nor is it

mercy that now caused this step to be taken. It is alarm that Our Lord will die on the way. Indeed some commentators have declared from a certain word used here by St. Mark alone, that our Lord was "carried" the last portion of the journey to Calvary, and that Simon of Cyrene not only helped Him to bear the Cross, but relieved Him of its weight entirely.

The incident is recorded in such a way as to suggest a scene of struggle and angry words. Our Lord had already fallen three times, as tradition tells us, and each fall meant a halt on the road, probably with an aggravation of cruelty augmented by anger. There is "a great multitude" around—a few of them sympathetic, but many hostile and enraged, expecting the sight for which they had worked so hard and so unscrupulously for many hours, and impatient of the least delay in its accomplishment. All are speaking of our Lord, when someone reads Death in His face. It is often possible thus to read Death in the face of the dying. So an alarm was raised, for after all He will die on the way, and this Cross has been made in vain ; after all we shall not need these nails, these hammers, and these men that are to use them. After all, the sentence wrung from Pilate with so much labour will never be carried out. What is to be done ? "Crucified He must be ; we are not far from Calvary now ; He has borne His Cross like a malefactor, and has had at least the shame of doing so before all the people ; let someone else carry it for the rest of the way." But who is it to be ? Who will stoop to pick up the Cross ? No one volunteers for the task ; even their longing to see it erect on Calvary, with our Lord attached to it, does not move them to do this. But lo ! most opportunely there is a man handy for the work ; he is a Jew, but that need not trouble us, for he comes from afar ; seize him

and put the Cross on him. But Simon declines, and there is a scuffle and a resistance, as the word used in the Gospel testifies. But at last he is overcome by numbers, resistance is of no avail, "and they laid the Cross on him, to carry after Jesus." "Who has touched me," said our Lord when an infirm woman made her way through the crowd to touch the hem of His garment, "Virtue, I know, has gone out from me," He added. So is it now. Virtue is going out from Him on that day of days. It is the season of grace, the leaven begins to work, Simon of Cyrene is among those who are called, "and wheresover the Gospel is preached, that also which he did is told for a memorial to him."

Our Lord rejoiced in the spirit that His teaching concerning the Cross was at length realised, for one of His own now bears his cross ; and though at first he did so grudgingly, later on he bore it gladly and to the end. And we must do as Simon did, for there is no exception to the rule. Is the cross still a scandal to us ? Are we bearing our cross daily, gladly, with patience, with love ? When we do so loyally, "virtue goes out from us" to make reparation to our Lord, and to help Him by helping those who are dear to Him, for "as long as you shall do it to one of My least members, you do it unto Me." Thus can we help those who fall, who are tempted, who suffer, who mourn, who are sick, to be resigned to the will of God. There is almost a pleasure in suffering, if we know that our tears fall on the heart of a friend we love, for thus we ever find strength and encouragement.

On the first Good Friday night, when our Lady gathered around her all the friends of her Son, who was the privileged one in that assembly ? It was Simon of Cyrene, who had ministered to our Lord in

His pain. There were also St. Mary Magdalen who anointed Him, and St. Veronica who wiped the blood and sweat from His sacred face. And what was St. Peter's thought and that of all the Eleven ? Oh, that we had done the same !

The positions are now reversed, and it is we who need some one to help us to bear our cross. Our Lord is ready, and needs no compulsion ; but the cross must be on our shoulders, else He cannot help us to bear it. It is in the Sacrament of His love that He becomes the divine Cyrenian. Bear your cross to the altar-rail, for there is no truer preparation for Communion than to have carried your cross bravely. It has weakened you, and you feel its pressure ; but the Bread that comes down from Heaven will strengthen you, for you have, perchance, yet a great way to go. "There is no health of the soul, nor hope of eternal life, but in the cross : take up then thy cross, and follow Jesus, and thou shalt go into life everlasting."

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM MEET OUR LORD

“AND they led Him out to crucify Him. And there followed him a great multitude of people, and of women, who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them, said : Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me ; but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold, the days shall come, wherein they will say : Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and the paps that have not given suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains : Fall upon us : and to the hills : Cover us. For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry ?”

The expedients of Pilate having signally failed to appease the thirst of the Jews for the death of our Lord, “he has delivered Jesus to their will.” Our Lord’s own garments are now placed on Him again, not in mercy, but at the cost of great pain, and that He may be the better known by all, and “bearing His own cross, He goes forth to that place which is called Calvary” for the final scene. “And there followed Him a great multitude of people, and of women, who bewailed and lamented Him.” Since His arrest in the Garden of Olives on the previous night, this is the first mark of sympathy He has received. Nothing has met His gaze save angry looks, and

eyes that riddle Him with scornful glances ; nothing has fallen on His ears but blasphemies, words of ingratitude, false charges, and questions of disrespect and insult. But now some slight tokens of pity are addressed to Him, for He hears the sobs of a few that are moved to tears as they see Him "a worm and no man," as they see Him fall beneath His load, and then attempt once more to bear it. After all, it was only a slight token of sympathy, but small as it was, it was noticed by our Lord, and acknowledged with gratitude.

"Jesus turning to them" (an act of courtesy that must have cost great pain) said, "Daughters of Jerusalem !" How striking and wonderful a way of address ! He does not say, "my little children," or "kind friends," but "daughters of Jerusalem !" Five days ago, our Lord seeing the city from the brow of Olivet had wept over it, and pronounced its terrible doom. Jerusalem was a city with a great history ; she was "the mistress of the gentiles, the city of perfect beauty, the joy of all the earth, but she has grievously sinned, her filthiness is on her feet, she hath not remembered her end, and from the daughter of Sion all her beauty hath departed." And soon these poor women, with their babes in their arms, shall see the fulfilment of that doom. Our Lord loved little children ; "suffer them to come to Me, and forbid them not," He had said ; gladly in times gone by had He laid His hands upon them to bless them, but now He cannot do so, for His hands are busy with His load. He can only gaze upon them with pity, that they will live to see the days which shall come upon their city, when its enemies shall cast a trench about it, and beat it flat to the ground, with never a stone left upon a stone. So our Lord addressed those who bewailed and

lamented Him, as representatives of the Holy City. "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over Me"—strange words surely, as strange as those He spoke to the widowed mother at the gate of Nain, as she followed her only son to the grave. To her He said, "weep not," and He says the same now, and with reason. "Awful as is My state, so that you can number all my bones, terrible as are My wounds, so that there is no soundness left in Me, 'the things concerning me have an end,' and that end is a victory. I have overcome the world. The last drops of the chalice My Father gave Me to drink are well-nigh drunk, and My kingdom, which is not of this world, is come upon the world. On My bruised, bleeding shoulder I carry that which is about to deal death its death-blow, the sign in which all shall conquer. Death shall go before My face, and the devil shall go forth before My feet. I shall be lifted up, and will draw all things to Myself. In three hours, all will be over; weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold the days shall come, wherein they will say: Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that had not borne, and the paps that have not given suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall upon us, and to the hills, Cover us: for if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?"

It is our Lord's last warning to the world, His last assurance of the law that sin ever works out its own punishment, His last revelation of the effects of sin in the human soul. "He that soweth shall reap evils, and with the rod of God's anger he shall be consumed. Transgressors shall pine away in the end. Know and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God."

No one becomes wicked in a day, for there is growth in evil, as there is growth in grace. But when Satan enters into a man and grace after grace is made void, the light of faith first flickers and there is extinguished, for want of the oil of love ; conscience can then no longer speak, good impulses no longer are felt, and a sickness ensues that blunts all nobler feelings, makes him callous, forgetful of God, and of the calls of duty, hard upon others, unwilling to listen to aught of good direction, living only for the moment, till death surprises him, when he may call upon the mountains to fall upon him, and to the hills to cover him. Our Lord is the green wood, but the sinner is the dry, in whom the fire of sin burns with deadlier effect, to the exclusion of the beatific vision, to the sharing with the devil and his angels the pain of eternal loss, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished." "They have wearied themselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways, but the way of the Lord they have not known."

We speak so lightly of the evil of sin : the sense of sin has lost its power and control ; the very existence of sin is practically denied, and that there is no such thing is calmly asserted. "Because sentence is not speedily pronounced against the evil, the children of men commit evils without any fear." The punishment and effect do not follow at once. God is in no hurry to reward the good, or to punish the wicked. We do not at once see how our sins affect us, for they do their work unobserved, till the fulness of time comes, and the day shall break when we are ready to call upon the mountains to fall upon us, and to the hills to cover us. "Come, let us take wine, and be filled with drunkenness ; and it shall be as to-day, so also to-morrow, and much more." "Let

us walk on in the naughtiness of our heart." So was it, as our Lord had said, "in the days before the Flood ; they were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, even till the day in which Noe entered into the ark, and they knew not till the flood came and took them away." "Their little ones go out like a flock, and their children dance and play. They take the timbrel and the harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in an instant go down into hell." When our first parents fell, God told them that death would be their punishment, but death did not at once knock at their door. Many years passed on, and no death was seen, save in the flowers and fruits of the earth. But stay, a cry of distress is heard in the field, and a brother is seen to run away, for the voice of his brother's blood cries to God from the earth. His mother goes to the scene, and finds it is Abel that uttered the cry ; he lies in a pool of blood, and his mother is beside him. She calls to her boy by name, "Abel, Abel," but there is no reply ; his blood reddens the ground, the punishment has come at last, and Eve now knows what death means. "Say not, then, I have sinned and what harm hath befallen me? for the most High is a patient rewarder; say not, the mercy of the Lord is great, He will have mercy on the multitude of my sins, and I will have peace, and will walk in the naughtiness of my heart."

Let us meet our Lord with His Cross, and bewail and lament Him, and bid Him fill us with "the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom, a fountain of life to decline from the ruin of death." And He will say to us : "Citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, weep not over Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children—for the duties assigned to you, for the deeds to which you have given birth

Mighty works have been wrought in you, which ought long ago to have made you do penance in sackcloth and ashes. Learn of Me that your iniquities will surely divide between you and your God, that your sins hide His face from you that He should not hear you, that they withhold good things from you. The fear of the Lord driveth out sin, and he that feareth God, will do good, and neglecteth nothing. Blessed is the man that is always fearful, but he that is hardened in mind shall fall into evil. Sin when it is completed begetteth death, and if in the green wood it doth these things, what shall be done in the dry ? Be not deceived ; God is not mocked."

## CHAPTER XL

### OUR LORD IS GIVEN WINE MINGLED WITH MYRRH AND GALL

"And they came to the place that is called Golgotha, which is, the place of Calvary. And they gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall. And when He had tasted, He would not drink."—(St. Matthew.)

"And they bring Him into the place called Golgotha, which being interpreted is, The place of Calvary. And they gave Him to drink wine mingled with myrrh, but He took it not."—(St. Mark.)

It will be noticed that there is some difference between these two accounts of the potion offered to our Lord, when at length He reached the summit of Calvary to be prepared for crucifixion. St. Matthew says : "they gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall," while St. Mark says : "they gave Him wine to drink mingled with myrrh," and St. Matthew alone adds : "and when He had tasted, He would not drink." There was a confraternity of pious women in Jerusalem, one of whose practices was to prepare some warm and soothing draught to be given to those about to be executed, containing substances that would deaden or diminish pain. It would also slake the thirst, occasioned by the loss of blood at the scourging, which usually preceded execution. With what care and sense of satisfaction would this be done for our Lord ! What joy for the heart of our

Lady to know that at least this slight alleviation would be given to her Son ! Since the last Supper, no refreshment of any kind had passed the lips of our Lord ; His Blood had been drawn from Him by blows and scourges ; His thirst cannot be described or imagined ; His tongue cleaved to His jaws. But now in sight of the Cross prepared for Him, this drink is offered—"wine mingled with myrrh." But St. Matthew says : "wine mingled with gall."

We do not know for certain what gall was, but the word by its etymology, means something "bitter," and it would spoil the sweetness of whatever it was put into, whereas myrrh deadens pain. St. Matthew's account is in fact a fulfilment of the prophecy : "They that drink wine made me their song, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

This is the explanation of the difficulty. The pious women had prepared their offering of compassion for our Lord with all care, but His enemies spoilt their work, and with malice mingled bitter gall into the potion, so that its perfection might be diminished, and the kind deed deprived of its full effect.\* When St. Mary Magdalen poured the ointment on our Lord's feet and head, the whole house was filled with the odour of the ointment, and Judas recognised its value by its fragrance, and protested against such waste. It is the same now ; the wine mingled with myrrh and spices is detected by the soldiers, and they declare it too good for our Lord. It is waste, because it is for Him, and they will spoil it by putting bitter gall into it, from sheer wickedness and spite.

\*This is the explanation and view of Benedict XIV and of Cornelius a Lapide. Steenkiste in his commentary on St. Matthew quotes Benedict XIV's opinion with approval.

The explanation of the incident contains the lesson it teaches. We feel indignant at the outrage thus perpetrated : surely cruelty and hatred have had their fill, and could not this small act of kindness be allowed to produce its full fruit ? There is something so petty, so mean, in thus spoiling the potion so kindly prepared. It is an illustration of the sin of spite, of charity wounded by sheer jealousy. "Is thy eye evil because I am good ?" Why is cockle over-sown among the wheat, that gave such promise for a harvest ? To act from spite is the result of harbouring bitterness. We have a dislike for another, or some grudge against him, and we hear that he is to reap a benefit, or to have some pleasure, or has been in some measure successful ; and we determine to spoil it in some way by an unkind remark or deed. We mingle gall in his wine that is mingled with myrrh ! Spite and jealousy !—these are the two evils that mingle the gall of bitterness into the warm wine of charity mingled with myrrh, prepared by the hands of our Lord to lessen the pains of this vale of tears. "Beware of jealousy, for it is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock the meat it feeds on ; it is the bellows of the mind, the injured lover's shell." What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult for each other ? Let us purge out all trace of bitterness against others, and see if ever we have mingled gall into the wine mingled with myrrh that was offered to a suffering member of the flock of Christ.

It was before the eyes of our Lady that the warm wine mingled with myrrh was spoilt by being mingled with gall, and she kept this deed in her heart, for in it she saw a type of what will ever be offered to her Son by her wayward children. He thirsts for their love, and the refreshment He offers them is so

pure, but in return, by mingled motives, by instability and indifference, by wilfulness and ingratitude, they offer Him wine mingled with gall, bitterness where all might be so sweet, and they offer it to one another also, unkindness where kindness would be so easy and so welcome. Often it is by tale-bearing that this cruel spoiling is effected. It is among the most bitter and poisonous fruits of jealousy. "The tale-bearer shall defile his own soul, and shall be hated by all." (Ecclus. xxi, 31).

"And when He had tasted, He would not drink." Though deprived of its perfection, the wine mingled with myrrh would yet had been able in some small measure at least to deaden pain, but our Lord would drink His chalice to the dregs ; and so with beautiful courtesy, He deigned to taste the drink offered to Him as an act of gratitude to those who had prepared it, but "would not drink," that He might suffer to the full the martyrdom of His sacred thirst.

May we be drawn to offer to Him in His thirst for souls a service that is warm and devoted, like wine mingled only with myrrh, a service in some measure worthy of Him who keeps the good wine till the last. May the charity of Christ urge us to remember that the Church is His Bride, and that she suffers in her members, who are our neighbours, as did our Lord in the garden of Olives and on Calvary, with a thirst for kindness and sympathy. May we never in the least increase those pains by changing wine mingled with myrrh into wine mingled with gall, by wanton spite, by thoughtless words, by envious revenge. May we, like our Lord, love one another with a charity that never falleth away, bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ.

## CHAPTER XLI

### THE CRUCIFIXION

"AND when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, they crucified Him there, and the robbers, one on the right hand, and the other on the left, and Jesus in the midst."

There is a simplicity and majesty in this sentence which must needs arrest our attention. The greatest fact in the history of the Sacred Passion is recorded in fewest words, and without the least detail, leaving it to us to construct the picture for ourselves, as best we may.

We should remember the presence on Calvary of our Blessed Lady, that before her eyes our Lord would first be stripped of the robe her own hands had woven for Him, and then thrown on to the hard Cross, His bed of death. It is terrible to see pain inflicted on those we love ; and was not our Lady's grief "great as the sea," as she saw and heard the nails driven through hands that had been raised only to bless and help, and through feet that had been weary through journeying after those that had gone astray ? Moreover there would be the further anguish of the sound caused by the coarse words that were spoken, as the pains were inflicted. "He hoped in the Lord, let Him deliver Him, let Him save Him," they would say in mockery, but Jesus kept on

saying : "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This, too, our Lady heard, and kept the word, pondering it in her heart.

All around are "enemies of the Cross," rejoicing that they have gained the day, blaspheming to the last, and they are helped by the robbers on either side, who cry out in their agony of pain, and both of whom at first "reviled" our Lord. And now, when they had "dug our Lord's hands and feet, and numbered all His bones," they raise the Cross aloft, and fix it in the ground, the sign that is folly and a stumbling-block to the world, but the hope of the little ones of the flock, to whom by faith its beauty and meaning are revealed.

Thus the three hours began, and our Lord entered the solitude of death. He became obedient unto death, for death is the direct penalty of sin, and like all the penalties of sin, such as poverty, pain and sorrow, death must be sanctified, and made an act of homage due to God rather than an actual punishment. All men die alone, clasping to the end their deeds, for they are a very part of themselves. "As a dream that fleeth away we shall not be found ; we shall pass as a vision of the night." Our Lord, too, died alone. His blessed Mother stood by His bed of death, but that fact, glorious as it is, did not diminish the solitude. Her presence was an anguish to our Lord, even as was His to Her ! the love of the Mother and the love of that Son were but wrestling with one another, increasing every moment by the friction of purity and unsatisfied desires, until the hearts of both were broken by the keenest of all sorrows, the parting of friends, before issuing in the unruffled peace of the first greeting on Easter Day.

The crucifixion of our Lord is the central fact in the economy of our Redemption. When St. Paul

wished to put an end to the parties that divided his Corinthian converts, and unite them once more, he said : “There are contentions among you, and every one of you saith, I indeed am of Paul ; and I am of Apollo, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ.” And then he put to them this short and telling question : “Was Paul crucified for you ?” He did not ask, was Paul transfigured for you in glory ? Did Paul raise the dead for you ? Did Paul teach for you ? No, none of these, but simply : was Paul crucified for you? and in this question he did but reiterate the statement of our Lord : “If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to Myself,” as though nothing but the Crucifixion were of any avail—the Crucifixion by which, in the inscrutable designs of God, the debt of man’s iniquity was paid, the disaster of the Fall repaired, and our Lord became the one Mediator, “ever living to make intercession for us.”—“Was Paul crucified for you ?” Of the Jews five times did he receive, forty stripes save one, thrice was he beaten with rods, once was he stoned, thrice he suffered shipwreck, a day and a night he was in the depth of the sea. In journeys often, in perils of robbers, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness—these and many more trials he endured, but never was he crucified for them. Only our Lord suffered thus.

And had St. Paul been crucified for them, of what profit would it have been ? Such self-sacrifice would be welcome to God and meritorious in His sight, but only in limited measure. It is the Person of the Crucified that gives the value to the crucifixion, and the infinite merit to that sacrifice of love and propitiation. “If He shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long lived seed, and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in His hand,” but only because He who does this deed is the Second Person of the

Blessed Trinity, true God, true Man, to whose every deed as man an infinite merit is attached.

Every good action has its proper effect towards God and towards ourselves. Every good action compensates for bad deeds, and obtains favour from God in return. It is at once satisfactory and meritorious. And this is true of all our Lord did as man. His deeds could not remain sterile, but must needs produce fruit. There was to be a harvest to His sowing, a glorious result to His labours. And all He did proceeded from a Person infinitely holy and divine, and was accomplished in the human nature He had voluntarily assumed ; but His deeds and words received their character and value not from their visible importance in the mundane order of things (for in this order they were simple enough), but from the Person who produced them. Hence one single deed of His, one tear, one prayer, one throb of pain, was sufficient to expiate the sins of mankind, and to purchase redemption for the whole world, because it possessed an infinite value, proceeding as it did from a Divine Person.

Our Lord thus merited for us from Bethlehem to Calvary, and the world might have been redeemed by the pains of the Holy Childhood, or by the sweat of His brow as He toiled as a carpenter at Nazareth, for His every deed surpassed in value by an infinite degree the merit of all the sufferings of martyrs and the heroic deeds of men and women in all ages.

The pains of Nazareth and of the Public Life had indeed their share in the world's redemption, but it was as though our Lord discounted these, and looked only to the pains of His Passion and Death as the payment of our ransom. That which He had sown was not quickened unless He died, and it was all for us men and for our salvation, depriving us of all

excuse for disobedience, exhorting us to generous service, to absolute trust, for "we are bought at a great price." "God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting." "Having joy set before Him He endured the Cross, despising the shame, and by His bruises we are healed."

The three hours passed by, and all the time virtue has gone forth from our Lord, and already He has drawn many to Himself. The moment has now come for Him to pass out of this world to the Father. He has asked for some cool water to quench His sacred thirst, and vinegar was pressed to His lips instead. It was the last outrage, and called forth the word : "it is consummated." Then he said with a loud voice : "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Those who were by the cross noticed that the head sank on His sacred breast. At once there is a striking change in many directions. The bystanders are scared, and hurry home, striking their breasts for fear of what shall come by reason of the crime of that day ; the solid earth beneath their feet shook, the rocks were split in twain, the graves were opened, the veil of the Temple was rent in two, and the centurion in command of the Sacred Hill declares before all that our Lord was a just man, nay more, that He was the Son of God.

But amid the desolation of those three hours, and amid the confusion of this great change, there was one who remained calm and true, praying with the understanding, her soul magnifying the Lord. "There stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother," witnessing the accomplishment of the scheme of copious Redemption, with every detail of which her mind had so long been stored. What happened on the first Good Friday was no surprise to her ; from her earliest years,

with that keenness of intellect which made her a seat of wisdom by reason of her being a tower of ivory, she knew what Scripture had revealed concerning Him whose name was Emmanuel. Her knowledge had been amplified in the years of intercourse at Nazareth. "Can I hide from my mother what I am about to do ?" had been our Lord's thought, and Mary had "kept all His words, pondering them in her heart," till at the foot of the Cross she saw "all things accomplished which were written concerning the Son of man."

And as her Child breathed His last, as she heard the music of the centurion's confession of faith, as she saw friends ministering to the Body of her Babe, and directed their work of devotion, "her spirit rejoiced in God her Saviour." His last word "it is consummated" had entered her immaculate Heart, there to show her "the great things which He that is mighty" had done for men, and how His saving work "reached from end to end mightily" and "ordered all things sweetly." "Lord, Thou hast blest Thy land, Thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob, Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of Thy people, Thou hast covered all their sins, Thou hast mitigated all Thy anger, Thou hast turned away from the wrath of Thy indignation. Thy people shall rejoice in Thee, for the Lord will speak peace unto His people, and unto His saints, and unto them that are converted to the heart : surely His salvation is near to them that fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth have met each other, justice and peace have kissed ; the waters of refreshment have met, and these are the fountains of our Saviour, whence waters may be drawn with joy by souls athirst." So does our Lady address her children at the foot of the Cross. And she proceeds : "Let, then, this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God,

thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross."

Born of the Father from all eternity, the Author of life, by whom all things were made, and without whom there was made nothing that was made, He laid no stress on His Eternal Greatness, but clothed Himself with a garment of human flesh, and became "a worm and no man," "the scorn of men, the outcast of the people." "He pleased not Himself," but deigned to forfeit His liberty of action, and to become obedient, for "as by the disobedience of one man many were made sinners, so also by the obedience of One, many shall be made just." He might have defied death at least, yet He submitted to the sway of that tyrant who claims us all.

"Let this mind be in you which also was in Christ Jesus." Such is the last stanza that completes our Lady's canticle of the Incarnation. Let them that have ears to hear, hearken unto it. It heralds forth great and novel truths ; it is the code for fallen man to accept ; it teaches him how alone he can succeed ; it is an utter upheaval of his own philosophy, and enthrones the spirit of little children as the most perfect ; it preaches humility, self-effacement, patience, sacrifice, consideration for others, obedience. Such is the mind of the Crucified, a stumbling-block and a foolishness to the natural man, yet," let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," for "humility goeth before glory."

At the foot of the cross, "a hiding place from the winds of life, a covert from the storm, a river of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a rock that standeth out in a desert land," let us learn the things that are to our peace from our Lady, the Mother of fear and of knowledge, the Mother of fair love and of holy hope.

## CHAPTER XLII

### THE DIVISION OF THE GARMENTS OF OUR LORD

"THE soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Him, took His garments (and they made four parts, to every soldier a part), and also His coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said then one to another : "Let us not cut it, but let us cast lots for it, whose it shall be : that the scripture might be fulfilled, saying : They have parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture they have cast lots. And the soldiers indeed did these things."

The division of the garments of our Lord on Calvary is recorded by all four Evangelists, but with greatest fulness by St. John, who was an eye-witness of what took place. Apparently our Lord had two chief garments, and there was a custom that the robes of the crucified should be the perquisite of the executioners. So, when they had crucified our Lord and the two thieves, their work for the present was over, and they were at liberty to entertain themselves in casting lots for their perquisite. The outer cloak was soon disposed of, for the four soldiers in charge quickly divided it into four parts, "to every soldier a part," signifying that our Lord's mantle and spirit have fallen on the four quarters of the globe, as

the mantle of Elias fell on Eliseus, for He wills all men to be saved. And so of the outer garment or cloak they made a division—"to every soldier a part." This garment of our Lord is a figure of the various works which, as it were, clothe the Body of our Lord, which is His Church, and these are divided, for "there are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit, and there are diversities of ministries but the same Lord ; and there are diversities of operations, but the same God who worketh all in all." In the early Church at Corinth, for example, the gifts of the Holy Ghost were variously distributed, and their distribution became at times a source of friction and of jealousy. There was a desire for the more showy gifts, such as the gift of tongues, and a certain disdain for the less showy gifts, such as the gift of prophecy. Yet the law was then as now : "to every soldier a part." Some are teachers, some are workers at home, some visit the poor, some adorn the house of God : but every department of work, if it be done for our Lord, is a fragment of His robe. Let every soldier take his part, and be content, free from jealousy, so that God be glorified, "so that Christ be preached." For "all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as he will, that there be no schism in the body, but the members may be mutually careful one for another. So if one member suffer anything, all the members suffer with it : and if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it."

But how is the coat to be treated ? It is without seam, woven from the top throughout, a piece of exquisite workmanship. Garments of this kind consisted as a rule of two pieces at least, but this is our Lady's work, according to constant tradition, and its perfect finish struck even the rough soldiers with

reverence and wonder. Probably they were quite close to the Cross, quite close to the Blessed Mother, for they are still on guard. She therefore would see their handling of the work of her hand, and hear what they said. She might suggest some means of dealing with this priceless relic, but there is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak, and "in silence and in hope shall her strength be." "They said then one to another : Let us not cut it, but let us cast lots for it, whose it shall be."

The seamless robe of our Lord is the symbol of unity, of the unity of divine truth, of the harmony of divine revelation. The truths of faith hang together like the links of a chain, and every truth is woven into all other truths. The Blessed Trinity aids the Incarnation ; the Incarnation aids the Immaculate Conception of our Lady ; the divinity of our Lord aids the Blessed Sacrament. Let us not cut this robe, as the world would do, nay, as it has done, glorying to take a shred, and be satisfied therewith, until the robe of truth no longer possesses warmth, or beauty, or shape, or power of protecting men from the cold winds of indifference and unbelief. On the sacred deposit of truth men readily play at dice, casting lots, flippantly and without reverence, as to how much of it they will accept and keep, as to what is necessary, what unnecessary, as to what commends itself to their judgment, or what they consider far-fetched and outrageous. But the teaching of our Lord is one, and not many, made up of component parts that depend upon each other, and "what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

"Whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all." Let us "not cut the robe without seam," but ever be "careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, one

body and one Spirit, as we are called in one hope of our calling. One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all."

Our Lord with His last prayer prayed : "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as we also are"; He prayed that "the Spirit of truth would lead us into all truth," not into a portion of it, but that we might be "made perfect in one." For this our Lord prayed, for this He suffered; let us not cut His seamless robe. "He is not the God of dissension, but of peace," and "we being many are one body."

Again, the robe of our Lord is the robe of fraternal charity. By this, as by our faith, we are united, and become His disciples indeed. "Let us not cut it," as so often we are tempted to do : "let us not cut it," as so often we wish to do : "let us not cut it," as at all hours we are in danger of doing. We must maintain its unity at the cost of pain, and thus "put on the Lord Jesus." The apostolate of charity may at times place us in positions, in which nothing short of heroism can keep us safe through the ordeal with which we are confronted. But care in small details is splendid training for yet greater trials that may be in store.

May we learn from our Lady on Calvary, as she saw the soldiers dice for the garments of her Child, the beauty of patience and gentleness, the grace never to be meddlesome and interfering, but to accept our work with the silence of content, with the inward joy that it can bear for our Lord the very fruit He seeks at our hands. May the unity of our faith strengthen the unity of our charity to others, winning the froward, bearing the perverse, "for this is the declaration which we have heard from the

beginning, that we should love one another." We will bear our crown of thorns, that the seamless robe of love be never cut or mutilated.

## CHAPTER XLIII

### THE TITLE ON THE CROSS

“AND Pilate wrote a title also, and he put it upon the Cross. And the writing was : Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. This title, therefore, many of the Jews did read : because the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city : and it was written in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin.\* Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate : Write not the King of the Jews, but that He said, I am the King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written.” This is St. John’s account of the title written to be placed over the Cross of our Lord, and of the angry interview between Pilate and the chief priests, to which it gave rise. The other three Evangelists all mention the title, but give the wording of it differently (see Appendix III), but St. John alone gives the full title, and also tells us who it was that wrote it. All four accounts agree in saying that the title described our Lord as “King of the Jews,” —King of God’s chosen people—and we can readily understand how the insertion of this word “King” would specially anger the Jews, as no doubt Pilate

\*This application of three languages in which the inscription on the Cross was written is taken from “Christ in the Church” Mgr. Benson.

intended it should. How many times that very day had they expressly declared that they "would not have that Man to reign over them." Barabbas may reign, but not our Lord. And had not one of their devices for getting our Lord condemned to death expressly been that He had said He was a king ? This was the head of His offending. Yet that title had been our Lord's from the first, and in denying it to Him, they were but rejecting what had been foretold. "Fear not, daughter of Sion, behold, thy King cometh to thee, sitting on an ass's colt," was a well-known prophecy concerning Him : and when He was born in Bethlehem of Juda, the first question asked about Him by the enquiring Magi had been : "Where is He that is born King of the Jews ?" And now, on the summit of Calvary, this tablet, written in Pilate's own hand, and in three languages, is disclosed to view, and eagerly read by all. Of all things that might have been written, this surely was the worst, and the most offensive—yet, as we know, the most true.

It is not difficult to imagine the indignation and bewilderment of Caiaphas, Annas, and others, at the first sight of this most formal assertion. No doubt Pilate intended it as an act of petty revenge, on those who had over-persuaded him that day to condemn an innocent Man to a most painful death of shame. Spiteful as it may seem, he saw in this designation a means of annoying those who had that day annoyed him, and disturbed the public peace. The writing of such tablets was customary at the time of our Lord, in the case of criminals condemned to death, and on them was written their sentence or the cause of their condemnation. Sometimes they were worn by the condemned around their neck, on the way to execution, so as to add to their shame. In the case of our Lord, Pilate did the work himself. The title

had to be written, and he will write it himself—"Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews,"—and he wrote it in three languages, for all to see and understand.

Attempts, of course, were at once made to get it changed, and a deputation of the chief priests went direct to Pilate to negotiate the matter. It is easy to imagine the rage and displeasure of Pilate at this further visit from them. He had had enough and to spare of their society for one day, and was in no mood to grant them favours, or to listen to any complaint as to what he had so carefully arranged. "Make Him out an imposter to the last," they would say ; "write that He assumed a title to which He had no shadow of claim, but call Him not our King. The place where He hangs on the Cross is close to the city, and everyone will read what is on the tablet." But Pilate's reply was short and curt in the extreme : "What I have written, I have written," was all the answer they received. And so it remains for all time, the most beautiful, the most true, description of our Lord ever given. He is Jesus of Nazareth, the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He chose Nazareth as His Home and School, and by His long life there, has enthroned for all time, the virtues most dear to Him, the virtues which all must learn, who would be His disciples indeed, for they are the strong and hidden forces by which the Kingdom of Christ is propagated, and souls are saved. They are poverty, simplicity, charity, meakness, the love of being unknown, patience, lowly toil, obedience, and prayer. Our Lord is Jesus of Nazareth—not of Jerusalem or of any large centre, but of Nazareth, from which the world ever wonders if any good can come. We need only reply, "come and see." And He is our King, to rule us by the might of His love, to draw us to

Himself as loyal subjects, to feed and sustain us by the richness of His generosity, to direct us by the laws He has promulgated for our good—"The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want for nothing."

But, while this description of our Lord is most true and fitting, it was written, not for His praise, but for His condemnation. The world ever condemns Him precisely because He is Jesus of Nazareth, and it writes its condemnation in three languages, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. They are the great languages of the world, from which others are derived, and represent three leading ideas, the True, the Beautiful, and the Good. Hebrew is the language of Religion and Truth : Greek is the language of Beauty, Philosophy, and Art : Latin is the language of Law and Order. On all three headings the world condemns our Lord and His Church, for she is, as they allege, the enemy to all three, whereas, as history abundantly proves, she is their one and only friend.

Condemn our Lord in Hebrew, for His Church is the enemy of true Religion, of education, of science and research. God is unknowable, says the world, because it desires Him so to be, that it may live without Him, uncontrolled, undisciplined, the lord of itself. But God has not left Himself without witness ; the heavens proclaim His glory, and "this is eternal life that they may know Thee, the only true God. and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." The Church has the fullness of the truth ; she is the teacher of men in faith and morality, she owns the keys and the power of using them. Her voice is ever raised to instruct, to warn, to correct, to guide, to cheer. "For this cause came she into the world that she should bear witness to the Truth : he that is of the truth heareth her voice." But the world stops

its ears, and will not listen ; stiff-necked and proud, it ever resists the Holy Ghost, and the condemnation of our Lord in Hebrew will continue till the end of time.

Condemn our Lord in Greek, for the world says it is itself sufficiently beautiful to satisfy the cravings of the human heart. But the Church denies its power so to do, and ever points to a better city, the beauty of which no eye hath seen, the music and harmony of which no ear hath heard, the joy and peace of which it has not entered into the heart of man even to conceive. "Eat, drink, be merry," says the world, feed sumptuously every day, be clothed in purple and fine linen, "enjoy the good things that are present, fill yourselves with costly wine and ointments, and let not the flower of the time pass by ; crown yourselves with roses, before they be withered ; let none of you go without his part in luxury." But the Church says : deny yourselves, chastise your bodies, and bring them into subjection, crucify your flesh with the vices and concupiscences, that you may grow to the likeness of Christ. These are her "hard sayings," and a weariness to the natural man. "The Church is not for our turn," they say : "she is contrary to our doings, a censurer of our thoughts, and grievous unto us even to behold ; she esteems us as triflers ; let us, then, examine her by outrages and tortures, and condemn her to a most shameful death." So is our Lord condemned in Greek.

Lastly, condemn Him in Latin, for His Church is the enemy of order and law and society, whereas in fact she is the power that makes for the right constitution of States, the upholder of the purity and beauty of family life, the protector of the poor and labouring classes, the friend of the orphan, of the sick, of the widow. Like her Founder, says the world, she stirs

up the people, forbids tribute to be given to Caesar, and brings not peace but the sword, for she divides families, and sets the father against the son, the daughter against her mother, by her unreasonable demands. We condemn her here, and we will rule society in her own way, by compromises, by standards of our own that shall substitute respectability for morality, and utility for what is right and true.

On lines such as these the warfare is carried on relentlessly between the Church and the world. Condemn our Lord in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin, cries the world, but we make reply : praise and extol Him in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin, for, as history proves, it is precisely the True, the Beautiful, and the Good that He has ever upheld and striven for, by means of the Church, His Spouse. Let Pilate's title remain ; let it be affixed to the Cross, for it is its true and only home, since through the Cross, the one solution of the mystery of pain and the riddle of life, the cause of Christ will be fought to the last, and will eventually triumph. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world."

## CHAPTER XLIV

### THE LAST BLASPHEMIES ON CALVARY

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole earth, until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying : Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani ? that is, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? And some that stood there and heard, said : Behold, this man calleth Elias. And immediately one of them running took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink. And the others said : Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to deliver Him." This fourth word of our Lord from the Cross is recorded only by St. Matthew and St. Mark, and it is the only one of the seven which they do record. Both writers tell us that it was uttered "with a loud cry," and "about the ninth hour," that is shortly before our Lord bowed His head in death. The words form the first verse of the twenty-first Psalm, one of the Psalms that describes the Sacred Passion, and quite probably this Psalm furnished the material of our Lord's silent prayer, through a portion at least of the three hours spent on the Cross. The word is one of desolation, depicting, as far as human language can, the mysterious abandonment of the Eternal Son by His heavenly Father, the Father

punishing the Son, at the very time when that Son was lovingly executing to the full His Father's Will. The darkness of the world around did but typify the desolation of the Sacred Heart, and soon that Heart will burst, and our Lord will die of its breaking.

On Calvary, when the crucifixion was finished, many "had sat down and watched" our Lord, and all through the three hours "they that passed by, blasphemed Him, wagging their heads, and saying : Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it, save thy own self ; if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests, with the scribes and ancients, mocking, said : He saved others, Himself He cannot save. If He be the king of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God, let Him now deliver Him if He will have Him, for He said : I am the Son of God. And the self-same thing the thieves also, that were crucified with Him, reproached Him with." "They looked and stared at Him, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people; they that saw Him, laughed Him to scorn ; they spoke with the lips and wagged the head." So the three hours went by, and before the ninth hour many had left Calvary, and gone back to Jerusalem. The Blessed Mother remained, and those who had eyes to see could see that the end was near ; voices were hushed, and there is solemnity around the death-bed of our Lord. The hill-top is like a sanctuary with the Blessed Sacrament exposed ; souls are being drawn to our Lord ; blasphemies and ribaldry there have been in abundance, but now their sound grows dim, when our Lord "with a loud cry" is heard to say : My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me ? "Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani." But the prince of this world

has still a few agents around the Cross, who can mock and mar the majestic solitude and stillness of the scene. They hear what our Lord has said, and at once make a play and rude joke of the first word, twice repeated. "Eli, Eli, did He say ? Yes, that was His cry ! surely you heard it, for it was very clear ; He seems to be calling Elias to His side ; let us see whether Elias will come to deliver Him."

At His Transfiguration, our Lord had spoken to Elias "of the decease which He was to accomplish in Jerusalem," and now, when that decease is near, Elias is thrown at our Lord in mockery. The words of the enemies of our Lord are prophetic, for they embody for all time the cry of the indifferent world that delays its return to God. At the end of the world, the Cross will be seen as the sign of the Son of Man, to whom all judgment is given by the Father ; Elias will herald the coming of the Judge ; and is it for that day that we are watching ? "Stay, and see if Elias will come to Him." We may stay too long, since for us "Elias is already come." Our Elias (did we but know it) is St. John the Baptist, who pointed out our Lord as the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, and "to-day, if we shall hear his voice, let us not harden our hearts." St. John, our Elias, tells us that there standeth One in the midst of us whom we know not, the latchet of whose shoes not one of us is worthy to stoop down and loose. For us Elias is already come to deliver our Lord, to set Him free to do His work in our souls, and may no obstacle be put in the way ! "The axe," so says our Elias, "is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down, and cast into the fire. Be you, then, ready, for at what hour you think not, the Son of man will come, and yourselves know

perfectly that the day of the Lord shall so come, as a thief in the night."

What pain it must have been to our Lord, and to His holy Mother, to hear these words so twisted from their true sense ! Our Lady knew them well ; there was not a verse of the Psalms that was not stored in her mind, and she kept them all, pondering them in her heart. She knew the thoughts of her Son, and rejoiced at the sound of words so noble ; but the symphony is ruined, for quickly there is heard the irreverent travesty and twisting of her Son's prayer : "He calleth Elias : stay, and see if Elias will come to deliver Him." It is not the only instance of our Lord's words being twisted and misrepresented. Both at His trial and on the Cross, one sentence of His was hurled at Him in mockery.

"This man said : I am able to destroy this Temple and in three days to rebuild it," so they alleged. Our Lord never said anything of the kind. "Vah, thou that destroyest the Temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it," so they blasphemed in mockery. Our Lord had never said anything of the kind. What He *did* say was this : "Undo (i.e. pull to pieces), divide up into its component parts (for our Lord never destroys, but always builds up)—"undo this sanctuary, and I will raise it from the dead" (St. John ii, 19), but they twisted and exaggerated every word. "Undo" was changed to "destroy," "sanctuary" was changed into "temple," "raise from the dead," was changed into "build up," as though with stones and cement, even as "Eli" was changed into "Elias" on Calvary. Our Lord loves His words, for they are the expression of Himself, true with the truth of God. He bids us make His words our own, with their true meaning and exact force. Do we ever twist them, making what is stern into what is

tyrannical, what is gentle into what is soft and almost meaningless, thus allowing ourselves either to lose heart because of the exaggerated severity of our Lord, or to presume on His mercy because of the forbearance He shows to sinners ?

This last blasphemy on Calvary pierced the Heart of our Lord with keenest anguish—an anguish the more keen because it was an outrage on what was so sacred and so true. It was the anguish of being misunderstood ; our Lord was misunderstood to the last ; to the last He is a sign to be contradicted. Even a direct prayer to His heavenly Father is misunderstood ; and it was a prayer uttered “with a loud voice.” Had He breathed the words in the gentle undertone of the sick and dying, so that only our Lady standing hard by the Cross could clearly catch what was said, some excuse might be offered for not taking them in their sense ; but He always “speaks openly to the world, in secret He has spoken nothing,” and He is misunderstood to the end. His gifts are mistrusted, His motives suspected, His words twisted, His offers misbelieved, and He may die of a broken heart. “O all ye that pass by the way, stay and see if there be any sorrow like unto mine.” This is a sorrow of our Lord’s sinless soul, and one which we may often be called upon to share. It is hard to be misunderstood ; the pain is great, and often suggests the cessation of all effort. May the example of our Lord, the charity of Christ be our stay and guide, and help us to persevere in “doing good to all men” to the end.

“The Lord will redeem the souls of His servants ; and none of them that trust in Him shall offend.”

## CHAPTER XLV

### ON CALVARY

"Greater love than this no man hath, that he lay down his life for his friend."

"A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I also have loved you."

WHEN we are summoned to the death-bed of a friend, or when God takes from us by death one whom we have loved, there rushes to our minds a complete picture of his life, and we realise as we have never done before, all that he was in himself, all that he has been to us. We remember his words, his deeds of friendship, his way and manner of life ; his peculiarities, his very sorrows and disappointments stand out, more especially if ever we had a hand in inflicting pain upon him. The whole aim of his life, the place he held in our lives, are clear before us, and help us to realise that a great past is over—a past made bright and warm by his help and friendship—and that we must now face the future alone, with only his memory to guide and support us. Something of this must have happened to the chosen friends of our Lord as the end drew near on Calvary on the first Good Friday, to our Blessed Lady above all, who had been with Him from the first, and was at His side to the last. But the others, too, in their measure,

would realise what it was to have known our Lord, and to have been privileged "to continue with Him in His temptations." Indeed for them a great past was over, and a massive future was to begin, in which all that our Lord had been, had given, had said, would be their treasure and their guide. And so to their minds, as a ray of brightest light, there came the remembrance of His life, His bearing, His words—now to be crowned by the seven last utterances from His hard bed of death.

The three hours were hours of anguish indeed, full of the bitter expectation of a parting, of a sorrow, that cannot be measured ; but it drew them to our Lord, it has drawn millions in all ages to Him, even as it drew Him to us. We were in His mind to the very end ; the day of His Passion has come at last ; the desire of His Sacred Heart to suffer for us is about to be fulfilled, and His thought was this : "I have loved these whom My Father gave Me with an everlasting love, but I must give them proof that this is so. If I speak with the tongues of men and of Angels, and have not charity, I shall be to them but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. I may know all mysteries and all knowledge, I may remove mountains, but if I have not charity it profiteth Me nothing. Wherefore let Me fall into the ground and die, for greater love than this no man hath that he die for his friend. I am the good shepherd, and the good shepherd giveth His life for His sheep, that His sheep may know His voice. When I am lifted up, they shall remember that I died and suffered for them ; leaving them an example that they should follow in My steps, that in the outpouring of My Blood, in the excess of My pain, they may know not only the reality of My love for them, but what I meant when I gave them the new commandment to

love one another as I have loved them. And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, but the greatest of these is charity."

"And Jesus said : Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

If ever it be true that "never did any man speak as this man," it is surely when we hear the first word from the Cross. The reserve of Holy Scripture is most marked with regard to this most awful scene. Only by a miracle of enduring love has our Lord reached Calvary at all ; the scourging at the pillar alone, to say nothing of the crowning with thorns, ought to have ended His life, but He will be obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross—and lo ! here He is. Behold the Man—He is ready—He is not dismayed. He is stripped of His own garments once more—and then comes the barbarity of the crucifixion. First the right hand—and then the left—and then the feet—blow after blow—the blood flowing, and oh ! the agony ! All is done as cruelly and as quickly as possible, for the very soldiers took sides against our Lord, as St. Luke tells us (xxiii, 36), and it is amid the infliction of this pain that our Lord cried out many times, yes, many times : "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." They did not know what they were doing, not fully—and the merciful charity of the Sacred Heart gladly seizes on that plea of partial ignorance, and weaves it into a prayer that takes Heaven by storm. "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." What charity is this ? It is a "charity that is patient, that is kind, that beareth all things." It is a charity that brings the crucifix before our eyes in moments of trouble, and lets us hear afresh the music of that first word. It is a charity that at once, if we possess it, assumes

command of our restlessness, of our desire to repay and be avenged, and says instead : "peace, be still," pouring oil on the troubled waters, giving us control and power to bear up bravely, nay even to assign kind motives ; giving us the light of Christ to believe that those who vex and oppose us know not what they do ; giving us the strength of Christ to pray for our enemies, to love them, and to do them good, praying for them that persecute and calumniate us, that thus we may be the children of our Father who is in heaven, "who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust," that thus we may be the brethren, friends and disciples of Him who with His first word on the Cross prayed many times : "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

My Jesus, give me this strong power of sweetest charity ; give it me from Thy right hand so cruelly pierced with a heavy nail. I need more command of myself, of my feelings, of my thoughts and words ; they run away with me, and lead me to sin. Give me a charity that is patient, that beareth all things ; a charity that is kind and interprets all kindly, for this I need as the strength of my soul, and without it I am weak and poor. Father, forgive all who have ever injured me, or given me pain ; they knew not what they did. Father, forgive all who now are unkind to me, they know not what they do ; let me bear the pain in union with Thy Son, to obtain forgiveness, and as a punishment for my many sins against Thee, against whom alone I have sinned and done evil, knowing quite well what I was doing. I am not worthy to be called Thy child ; make me as one of thy servants, and give me the while a charity that is patient, that is kind ; give me a charity that beareth all things.

"And one of those robbers who were hanged said to Jesus : Lord remember me when thou shalt come into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said to him : Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

How different was the attitude of the Good Thief towards our Lord as the journey to Calvary began, to our Lord's attitude towards him ! Our Lord regarded him with love, as a friend in misfortune, as one who would by his very presence comfort Him : but the thief regarded our Lord as a bitter foe, as one who had hastened his death, as one whom he would fain strike if it lay in his power ; at any rate he will vent his rage against Him in many a blasphemy. During the hours of His sacred Passion, our Lord by a look had brought one sinner—St. Peter—to repentance and to tears. Is it far-fetched to suppose that our Lord turned and looked on Dismas on the road to Calvary, and when they hung together side by side ? Our Lord was ever about His Father's business, and grace is going from Him at all times ; already the power of the first word is making itself felt in heaven above and in the heart of that poor malefactor, who certainly had not known what he did when he sinned, as clearly as we do. Grace is poured abroad, and the man's heart is touched ; his sense of right and justice, which is never extinct in any one, grows strong, and now asserts itself. He will be just to the Man of Sorrows beside him, and declare that He has done no evil ; he will be just to himself and his companion, and declare boldly and before all that they both have done much evil ; he will be just to his God and make known his petition to Him ; he will be just to the infinite mercy of God, and make his petition bold in proportion. "Lord, remember me, when Thou comest

into Thy Kingdom." "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." What charity is this? It is a charity that is "not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own." "The bruised reed it does not crush, the smoking flax it does not extinguish." Where do we see the permeating, restoring power of charity more superbly than in this unique incident in the life of our Lord? The conversion of Mary Magdalen is as nothing to the wonders of this conversion. It stands out before us for our wonder, and for our shame. Do we believe in the restoring, helping power of charity? Or are we puffed up, proud to those who are not to our taste, ambitious for our own likings, determined to seek our own, with no care for others whom we perchance despise as hopeless, and whom we make to feel that they are not to our turn? Oh, for the universality of Christian love! Oh for a charity which does not pick and choose! Oh, for the belief that all the law is fulfilled in one sentence: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Gal. v, 14.) Oh, for the practice of true gentleness in word and deed, that melts the hardest heart by its warmth, and leads souls to God! To enthrone that charity within us is to be in Paradise with our Lord, gathering with Him, "going about doing good, bearing one another's burdens, being kind one to another, merciful, forgiving one another, even as God hath forgiven us in Christ." (Ephes. iv, 32.)

"Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother." There is no more beautiful feature of the Incarnation than that our Lord, in becoming Man, deigned to become the child of a human mother. The third word from the Cross carries the mind back to the very beginning, when at Bethlehem on Christmas night there first showed itself the union between

those two hearts, which was to grow and become more and more firm as the years at Nazareth passed away. In all that time Mary has been the hand-maid of the Lord, and Jesus has been subject to her. Full of grace, her soul rejoicing in God her Saviour, she has put out her hand to strong things, and has ever been close to the Cross of her Son. And our Lord, by becoming Mary's child, became our brother, and the third word from the Cross does but declare the close relationship that has existed from the first. Our Lord would not declare it before, because "a brother is proved only in distress" (Prov. xvii), and until He has become a Man of Sorrows and obedient unto death, He will not venture to say: "I am your Brother, and My Mother is your Mother. Treat her as I have done: trust her as I have done: and she will be to you, what she has been to Me." But He says so now—as well He may. It is His last gift—"Lady, behold thy son; son, behold thy mother." The words were spoken early in the three hours; St. John at once acted upon them, and our Lady kept pondering them in her heart. They clothed our Mother at the moment of her intensest martyrdom with a fresh dignity, and called her to a field of labour most vast and wonderful. What charity is this? It is a charity that "believeth all things, that hopeth all things." When our Divine Lord thus bade our Lady be our Mother, the soul of Mary magnified the Lord by a superb act of faith born of love, believing firmly and truly in her vocation, believing in the value of souls and the greatness of her work on their behalf, believing that her prayers would have great power with God (for God never gives us a work to do for Him, without assigning also the means for its accomplishment), believing in the merits of the Precious Blood of her Son, believing

that no word is impossible with God, and that from the jaws of death and the enemy of souls millions upon millions of souls should be snatched, and find at the last a home in one of the many mansions of their Father's house. And Mary rejoiced by reason of the hope that beat within her breast, a hope fed by love, that in spite of the poor material, glorious results should be achieved, and a rich harvest gleaned for eternity as the result of her Son's obedience unto death.

Oh, that we possessed some measure of Mary's charity that believeth all things, and hopeth all things ! It is the feature of a mother's love for her child—it should be a feature, too, of our love for the work given us by God to do. To face it with faith and hope, made vigorous by charity ; to see beauty in it because it is for God ; to be determined to get good from it, and to make it a success in God's eyes, even though it fail in the esteem of men—such a charity drives languor and depression from life's day, gives tone and soundness, depth and reality, to every prayer and every particle of our daily toil. Let us pray to the Mother of Sorrows for this Spirit ; like St. John, let us take her to our own ; and like Mary our Mother, let us put out our hand to strong things, not eating our bread idle, but looking well to our paths, with a charity that believeth all things, and hopeth all things.

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole earth, until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying : Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani ? That is, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

We are passing on towards the end of the three hours, and about the ninth hour this loud cry came from the lips of our Lord. It attracted attention ;

perchance they who stood by thought He would never speak again, not realising that He was God, with power to lay down His life and power to take it up again at will. Since He last spoke, some two hours have gone by, in a silence as of a quiet hour before the Blessed Sacrament. The friends of our Lord creep yet closer to the Cross, while His enemies are leaving Calvary one by one, striking their breasts, feeling that a fearful crime has been committed, and that they have been led astray, as the darkness thickens, and the sun at noonday gives no light. But that outer darkness is but the symbol of the desolation that has enfolded as in thickest cloud the Soul of our Lord—a desolation that He felt in the garden of Olives, when He began to fear and to be heavy, to be sorrowful and to be sad—for the eternal Father was now punishing His Son, as the thongs of men could never punish Him, and there was allowed to enter the soul of our Lord, in some mysterious way, that pain of loss, that desolation and sense of failure, akin to that which the lost souls in hell experience in all the ages of eternity. “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” With what love, what clinging to the Father, is this word uttered! It betrays no sign of impatience; it is but a bitter cry for help and light, where no light seems to shine.

What charity is this? It is a charity that “thinketh no evil, that dealeth not perversely”—and as such, with what force of gentle reproof does this fourth word strike home to us? Our difficulties! How large a part of the history of our lives do they fill! How large a part will they play when we reach Eternity, in assigning to us our exact place before God! Are we loyal, brave, submissive, cheerful in face of them? Or do we, because God seems far away, because friends are strange, because

little or no fruit is seen as the outcome of our toil, "deal perversely" with God and with our neighbour, and "think evil" of them ? That God is hard, nay unjust, that friends are untrue and unreliable, fickle and inconstant—is this our thought and persuasion ? Do we cry in impatience and rebellion : My God, Thou hast forsaken me, though Thou biddest me cast all my care on Thee, for Thou hast a care for us ?

That angry, rebellious state of mind is the fruitful mother of many sins and irregularities. "I will pray no more ; I will do just what I am bound to do, but no more." These are the feverish expressions and evil resolves of many a child of God that is invited to enter the lowly grotto of the Agony, or take its stand by the suffering Mother on Calvary, there to share the desolation of the Sacred Heart that found relief and expression in the cry : My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me ? At such times, let us be wise, and trust God with a humble trust—clinging to our post and looking for the dawn of a brighter day with a charity that "dealeth not perversely," with a charity that "thinketh no evil."

"Afterwards Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, said : I thirst."

What must have been the anguish of our Blessed Lady and of the disciple whom Jesus loved as they heard that tender complaint of our Lord almost at the last ! There is no torment to equal that of intense thirst, and behold, here is a Mother close to her suffering Child, here is a friend close to his dying friend, and there is an appeal for some cooling refreshment, but neither have it in their power to satisfy the appeal ! Our Lord must suffer His thirst to the end, as He does to-day in His suffering members ; who cry, "I thirst," but there is not enough of

the milk of human kindness nor of the gentle dew of mercy to slake the consuming pain.

This fifth word is a most tender summary of our Lord's work for us, and of His bearing towards us. From Bethlehem to Calvary He has "thirsted" to be our servant, to wash our feet, to put us on His own beast, to take care of us, to pay our debts, to pour oil and wine into our wounds. He has not sought His own glory ; His love is all unselfish ; He has thirsted to give us of the best. And He is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, always consumed with a thirst to love and help us, speaking to us from every Tabernacle-door : "Come to Me, and I will refresh you, while your love is the cooling of My intensest thirst." Here is our example—what charity is this ? It is a charity "that envieth not, that rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth."

The "eye of the envious is wicked," and being ungenerous to others, they are ungenerous to our Lord, also full of the root of bitterness, never offering to cool the thirst of our Lord's suffering members. The acid vinegar which the soldiers on Calvary put on a sponge to our Lord's parched lips in mockery, is all they care to offer. How opposed to the generous, cheerful, unselfish bearing of our Lord towards us ! Yet, how common is this vice of envy ! It ruins many lives ; it deprives its victims of all peace ; it dulls their power of doing good. In considering this word of our Lord, which preaches to us so awfully the evils of the unkindness that is born of jealousy, let us thirst to do our best for all, to think the best of all ; to pray our best for all, to speak our best of all, never rejoicing if others are humiliated or in trouble, but ever ready with a sympathy that is deep and kind. Let every word and deed be as the offering of a cup

of cool water to the lips of our Lord on the Cross, as He tells us, for our good : “I thirst, I thirst,” so as to prompt us to deeds of a charity that “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth,” so that we may “know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren,” with “a charity that envieth not.”

“Jesus, therefore, when He had taken the vinegar, said : ‘It is consummated.’” There is a note of triumph in this sixth word of our Lord. It is a word of power and majesty, that surveys the great past in all detail, and gathers it together as a holocaust to be offered to the Eternal Father. “It is consummated : I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do.” From first to last that work has been deeply stamped with the Cross, as with the royal seal. From a human point of view, there is not one attractive feature in it ; it is built up of materials which the world dislikes and despises to this day ; it is woven without seam of the threads of poverty, labour, contradiction, humility, the being unknown and despised, penance and self-control. Yet, it is a glorious robe of many colours, fair to the eye of faith, as cloth of gold in the eyes of God it clothes and protects from the chill blast of sin and worldliness the little ones of the flock who creep to the Cross for comfort and strength. By whose hand is it woven ? By the hand of the Charity of Christ—of a charity that “is not provoked to anger,” but “endureth all things,”—the Charity of Christ which urges us. The opposition of prejudiced enemies, the thwartings of poisoned wills, the want of faith among friends, the desertion of His own, even betrayal by one specially chosen, to say nothing of the blows and buffetings of the sacred Passion—all these our Lord endured, rejoicing in the spirit, ever

about His Father's business, and He endured them with patience to the end. The work is now finished, and the cry goes forth : "It is consummated : I have finished the work, O Father, Thou gavest Me to do." Here is our example in all work for God, and where our Lord triumphs, there we so often fail. Our work is not finished, for it is often done with a love that is provoked to anger, and is not patient. We work and serve by fits and starts, as the mood prompts us : we grow discouraged, fretful, disconcerted, averse to advice and counsel : we lose hope and waste time, and at the end, we shall not have consummated our task.

All work for God must show that we have taken pains in its accomplishment. We love to see evidence of this in what we ourselves examine, or produce : "I took pains over it," we say with glad gratitude. Let us with the triumph of the sixth word ringing in our hearts to awaken us to better effort, and to cheer us on our road, gather up the threads of our work for God, be it what it may : let us see that all its threads resemble the threads He chose to weave, and then ply our loom afresh, and go on our way rejoicing, that our work be as a robe woven without seam, by a charity that is not provoked to anger, by a charity that endureth all things.

"And Jesus crying with a loud voice, said : 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.' And saying this, He gave up the ghost." Even as there was a note of victory in the sixth word, so in the seventh and last is there a note of peace and rest. The storm has spent itself now : the tide is turning wondrously, as the Prince of Peace draws near to His end. Let us bring the scene before our eyes as fully as we can. What a change since the three hours began ! Many have gone home from Calvary

in dismay at what they have seen ; brutality and cruelty can do no more ; and the end comes quietly, and with peace. Our Lady is still standing by the Cross ; she knows the last moments are drawing near, and that soon she must witness the death of her First-born. But she is now the mother of many, and soon another child of hers will die, Dismas the good Thief. So it is in all time—to-day for me, to-morrow for you—and our Lady must be present with all. Our Lord has taken the sting and bitterness from death, but not its universal sway. How has He done so ? What makes that end so wonderful, so full of peace ? It is what it is, because it is the close of a life of love, and is marked by a “charity that never falleth away.” All has been done for God alone, with love, with devotion, with patience, with singleness of aim ; all has been placed as a gift of love into the Father’s hands : all came from those hands, and all returns to them again with the kiss of love and the stamp of obedience upon it. And now the life of the most Beautiful among the children of men, closes with the words : “Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.” “Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, in peace.” Let us go forward bravely to the hour of our death—that index of life—that tender teacher—whose function now, since our Lord died, is to console and to speak to us of home, “where the wearied in strength are at rest.” What will make death bitter ? It will be to have served God and our neighbour with a charity that falleth away. What will make it sweet and full of peaceful hope ? To have served God and our neighbour with a charity that never falleth away. Life is hard, and there is much to suffer and to face : our lot is to be crucified with our Lord, and to suffer with Him, but let our crucifixion be a reality ; let our arms

be extended with an all-embracing charity that falleth away ; let our feet be pierced by ever walking on the beaten road of the Cross ; let the head be ever bowed in submission to God's will ; hold fast and walk in love, as most dear children ; and when the end comes, the charity that never fell away will reign as queen, and in peace, in the self-same, we shall fall asleep, like our Lord, on Mary's breast, lisping the holy Name of Him who, at the last hour of a life, wherein charity never fell away, cried with a loud voice : "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

## CHAPTER XLVI

### THE OPENING OF OUR LORD'S SIDE WITH A SPEAR

“THE soldiers therefore came, and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs, but one of the soldiers opened His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it gave testimony, and his testimony is true. And he knoweth that he saith true, that you also may believe. For these things were done that the scripture might be fulfilled, you shall not break a bone of Him. And again another scripture saith, they shall look on Him Whom they pierced.”

“He that saw it” and “he that giveth true testimony” is St. John, “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” who stood by the Cross during the three hours to the end, and then took charge of our Blessed Lady. He alone records this incident, and in his first Epistle (v. 5), he makes a pointed reference to it : “This is He that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ : not by water only, but by water and blood.”

It happens but seldom that Holy Scripture thus at all repeats itself, or in any way seeks to explain or enforce its words. For the most part they are left to speak for themselves, difficult as they may be. But

here an exception is made to the rule, and St. John is most precise and careful not to be misunderstood. "This is He that came not by water only, but by water and blood." In the account of what took place at the ninth hour on Calvary, blood is mentioned first, for then we were redeemed by the Precious Blood, as of a Lamb, unspotted and undefiled, but in the Epistle the order is reversed, and water is mentioned before the blood. Our Lady saw that last outrage, but her soul magnified the Lord, and her spirit rejoiced in God her Saviour, though she "mourned for Him as one mourneth for an only Son." She understood the lesson which the opening of the Sacred Side was to preach : "this is He that came by water and by blood, my Son, Jesus Christ : not in water only, but (as you see) by water and blood," and "the tears are on her cheeks" as she saw the truth of the words in the body of her Child, "the most beautiful among the children of men."

For first "He came by water," not by the strong wine of His Kingship, but by emptying Himself, and taking the form of a servant, that "being strong, He became weak," lowly and meek of heart, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, despised, and rejected in labours and poverty, from His youth. And when He would open His mouth, and begin to speak to us in parables, as one having power, to tell us the things that are to our peace, He first descended into the waters of the Jordan, to be baptised in the sight of all, as though He were a sinner, and not rather the beloved Son of the eternal Father, in whom that Father is well pleased. In those waters He robed Himself with humanity, preaching to us cleanliness and innocence of heart, humbling Himself before He is exalted, and thus crowning the teaching of the thirty years at Nazareth, simple as the rivulet that

flows by the wayside, sparkling in the sunshine as it hymns its music in its onward flow to the ocean. These are the lessons of Jesus of Nazareth ; these are among the fountains of our Saviour, that flow so abundantly from the hills of eternity, refreshing and cleansing like cool water on a summer's day, and only dashed into foam when they meet the resistance of man's hard and rocky heart. They come to us with their refreshment, to bid us be as little children, loving to be unknown, thinking little of ourselves, poor in spirit, rejoicing in toil that is hidden, refreshing all by our spirit of kindness and charity, clean of heart, fresh with the dew of grace, not craving for the hot and intoxicating wine of excitement, of publicity, of popular applause, of riches and success, but content, like our Lady, with the waters that flow from the wells of Nazareth, ever clear with the clearness of truth and simplicity, content to wait for the good wine till we have continued with our Lord in His temptations to the end, and then are bidden sit at His table, sharing His banquet, in the kingdom of the just made perfect, having first learnt of Him who came by water, to be meek and lowly of heart. "This is He that came by water."

But "not by water only, but by water and blood." There was a baptism with which He was to be baptised, and it was a baptism of blood, for without such baptism there was to be no remission of sin, no blotting out of the handwriting against us. There was a chalice to be drunk, for such was the Father's will, and it was full to the brim of pain—pain of body and pain of mind—that operated in combination beneath the shades of Olivet, when His soul was sorrowful even unto death, and the blood flowed in clots on to the ground.

The Precious Blood that flowed without ceasing

for well-nigh twenty-four hours, till its last drop was drawn, speaks to us of the sanctification of human pain, of how all that has to be endured in this restless world is gathered together by the wounded hands of Him who came by blood, and is offered to the eternal Father as a holocaust, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, on the Altar, mingled with the pleading merits of the Precious Blood which speaks better things than that of Abel. It speaks to us of the absolute need of self-denial, for only if we suffer with our Lord shall we reign with Him ; of a self-denial that is generous and determined, resisting unto blood, if need be, heroic in its degree, the endurance of soldiers, bidding us face our cross, and bear in union with the sacred Passion the parting of friends, the disappointments, difficulties and pains both of mind and body from which no life is ever free. This is the spirit, this the teaching, of Him who "came by water and blood." Do we at all wish that our Lord had come "by water only ?" Do we feel that we could be among His disciples, but then it is the "hard sayings" of the Passion, the rugged preaching of the Cross, that "turns us back, and induces us to walk no more with Him, who came not by water only, but by water and blood ?"

"Passion of Christ my comfort be ; Blood of Christ inebriate me ; water from the side of Christ wash me, O good Jesus, listen to me ; in Thy wounds I fain would hide, never to be parted from Thy side."

Thus was the road to the Sacred Heart of our Lord opened for all, and as we study the depths of its love for men, let us learn the lessons which it teaches let us "look on Him whom we have pierced."

## CHAPTER XLVII

### THE BREAKING THE LEGS OF THE TWO THIEVES ON CALVARY

"THEN the Jews (because it was the Parasceve) that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day (for that was a great Sabbath day) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers therefore came ; and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with Him."

All four Evangelists record that our Lord was crucified between two robbers, so that "with the iniquitous He might be reputed," but only St. John, the eye-witness of the Crucifixion, records the fact of their legs being broken before they died. He also gives the reason for this brutality, namely, that "their bodies might not remain on the cross on the Sabbath day, for that was a great Sabbath day." It is not easy to decide exactly who these "robbers" were, but certainly they were not thieves and house-breakers in the ordinary sense of the word. The more common opinion seems to be that they had been the companions of Barabbas ; that they had joined in his sedition, which was a revolt against the Roman rule in Jerusalem, and that with their leader, at the time of our Lord's Passion, they lay in prison

under sentence of death. Probably they had heard that Barabbas had been set free ; and why might not they too be pardoned ? why are they to add to the spectacle of the crucifixion, and to be associated with one whom their own people called a "malefactor ?" Before they started that day for Calvary they were cruelly scourged, as was the custom, and bearing their own crosses, they have gone forth to Calvary, accompanied by a great multitude of people, There they have been crucified, the agony of which crucifixion no words can describe, and they are arranged expressly on either side of our Lord, in order to make a greater show of the whole affair, to add to their ignominy and punishment, and to assert to all the world that they are associated with "a seducer" and "a malefactor." And now for three hours they have hung upon the cross, their hard bed of death. Let us try to imagine at least a little of the experiences of those hours of grace, of horror, and of mystery. Around them all is confusion, the air is full of evil talk, many are coming and going, the darkness of the eclipse is every moment increasing, the anger of the priests and their followers vents itself in blasphemies and cries of derision, and only around the Cross of our Lord does peace seem to reign. "The people stood beholding, and the rulers with them derided Him, saying, He saved others, let Him save Himself if He be Christ, the chosen of God,"—words which one of the robbers who were hanged later on made his own in a remarkable way. (St. Luke xxiii, 35.) And all the time these two men are dying, and they know it ; they are dying in awful pain, and no one seems to care. Had it not been for our Lord, they might perchance have escaped this punishment (so they may have thought) or at least have been put to death more mercifully and more

quickly. So they groan aloud in their pain, and seek for some relief in reproaching and reviling the Divine Sufferer in their midst, who opens not His mouth, or only opens it to pray : "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

So the three hours at length passed by—a very eternity to those who were suffering—and the end has come, and our Lord bows His head in death. The robbers, however, are not yet dead, for it takes a great deal to kill a man. No vital part had been attacked ; they had borne no crown of thorns to pierce the brain ; and as evening is coming on, and to-morrow is the great Sabbath day, their death must be accelerated. So Pilate is asked to give leave that their legs be broken, and their bodies carted away. And Pilate gave the leave, for what did he care for a little pain more or less ? So the Jewish priests came back to Calvary, with Pilate's authorisation and soldiers with them, with cruel instruments for the awful work now to be done. Imagine some poor sufferer in a ward of one of our hospitals, who has to have even one of his legs broken, with no chloroform to make him insensible to the pain, as was done to St. Ignatius Loyola more than once. The doctors arrive with their instruments to carry out their work, and the patient sees them prepare. What agony of mind he would go through, to say nothing of his bodily pain. How the doctors would pity him—how they would loathe their necessary work—how they would try to comfort him with kind words. Such a scene may help us to picture the scene on Calvary as witnessed by our Lady and St. John, for they saw and heard it all. What is going to happen ? who are these just come from Pilate ? what orders have they brought ? of what are they speaking to Longinus, the centurion ?

Then Longinus announced what has been decreed "Pontius Pilate at the request of the Jews, orders that the legs of these men be broken forthwith, and their dead bodies be taken from their crosses before the Sabbath day." And the executioners at once obey ; the two thieves see the hammers and clubs all ready for the deed ; they shriek for mercy, but in vain. Break right through the bones is the order, or, as some say, cut through the bones with a saw, that blood may flow freely, and the loss of blood and the agony may make them die quickly. "So the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first and of the other that was crucified with Jesus." It is an awful and a heartrending scene. Let us again remember that our Blessed Lady witnessed all ; she heard the crash of the hammers, she heard the bones break, she saw the blood flow, she heard the moans of the dying robbers.

Such is the work of the Prince of this world and of the powers of evil. As they acted then, so do they to-day ; they overstep the bounds, and carry things to excess ; there is no measure in the lengths to which their greed for sin hurries them along, and at the last the world itself becomes weary of its own iniquity, and hastens by any means to put an end to the sad tragedy it has inaugurated. And then it ever turns on its own victims, for it is tired of them. For those who love and serve our Lord, there comes, as life passes on, a fuller and an ever deeper measure of peace, and inward joy, and thankfulness. They die in peace ; but for the victims and slaves of sin, the world has only hatred and persecution in store at the close, for it grows weary of them when they have lost their freshness and youth. "Let them die, let them die soon, the sooner the better ; break their legs, and cast their bodies away ; our great Sabbath day, our day

of feasting and revelry must not be disturbed at all,"—such is the cry. Indeed the world is a cruel, selfish, heartless master; ever hasty and pushing, vulgar and cruel, self-advertising, without heart or consideration. How different is it with our Lord, who having loved His own who were in the world, loves them unto the end! It is not too much to suppose that the robbers bore their pain in very different fashion, for suffering either hardens or softens. The Good Thief, to whom already the bliss of Paradise had been promised that very day, bore his pain gladly to the end, and offered it to God for his sins. Did the other at all accept it thus, and was it the blessed means of his conversion? Let us hope so, and let us try when, as so often happens, our legs are, as it were, broken, that is when the work done for our Lord is all misrepresented and crushed, then to turn to our Lady the Mother of sorrows, and plead with her for comfort in our pain by what she endured on Calvary, and let us bear it, sharp though it be, in the spirit of the Good Thief, the first conquest of Mary's prayers, with trust and conformity to the Will of God, saying only in our hearts: "we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds but this Man hath done no evil. Lord, remember me, now that Thou art in Thy Kingdom," and "our Father, who seeth in secret, will repay us."

## CHAPTER XLVIII

### ST. JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA BEGS THE BODY OF OUR LORD

THERE is no point in the Gospel story of the sacred Passion more clearly emphasised than the great and sudden change that took place at the moment of our Lord's giving up the Ghost. For one thing, He seems to have died earlier than was expected. Pilate, we are told, "wondered that He was already dead," when Joseph of Arimathea made his bold petition for His body. Clearly the bystanders expected a longer agony, and to the very end the tide of battle seemed to verge all in one direction—a victory for the prince of this world. Our Lord, who had been a very centre of attraction to thousands, was deserted by practically every one : but as He bowed His head and gave up the Ghost, the stream of the river which makes glad the City of God, turned its flow towards Him. He had gained a great victory, He had proved Himself the Lord mighty in battle, and began to draw all men to Himself. And among these are Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.

"And when evening was now come (because it was the Parasceve, that is, the day before the Sabbath) Joseph of Arimathea, a noble counsellor, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God,

came and went in boldly to Pilate, and begged the Body of Jesus. But Pilate wondered that He should be already dead. And sending for the centurion, he asked him if He were already dead. And when he had understood it by the centurion, he gave the Body to Joseph."

Already during the hours of the Sacred Passion, Joseph, a "good and just man," had defended our Lord, by "not consenting to the counsel and doings of the Jews." He was "a disciple of Jesus, but in private, for fear of the Jews"; he has now come to know the charity of Christ, and perfect love casteth out all fear; so "he went in boldly to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus." The petition was a bold one indeed. We know the intensity of Pilate's hatred of the Jews, and if ever there was a time when that hatred would be at its height, it was on the first Good Friday night, when he realised the deed they had persuaded him to commit. What were Pilate's feelings when told that one of the Jews desired to speak to him? Small wonder if he had refused even to see him, much less to grant such a request. All this Joseph boldly faced. Pilate wondered at first if our Lord could so soon be dead, but having made sure that so it was, he gave leave to Joseph to possess the Body. Was not this the gladdest moment of Joseph's life, almost as glad as the day of his First Communion? At once he goes to buy fine linen in which to wrap his Treasure, and soon he was joined by Nicodemus who "at first came to Jesus by night," and who now "brings a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight."

So these two reached Calvary, and presented themselves to our Lady, and informed her of Pilate's permission, and asked her leave to bury her Son with all care and devotion.

"And Joseph, taking Him down wrapped Him up in a clean linen cloth, with the spices, as it is the custom with the Jews to bury. And there was in the place, where He was crucified, a garden ; and in the garden, a new sepulchre, which he had hewed out in a rock, wherein never yet any man had been laid. There, therefore, by reason of the Parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus, because the sepulchre was nigh at hand. And Joseph rolled a great stone to the door of the monument, and went his way. And Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of Joseph, beheld where He was laid. And the Sabbath day drew near. And returning, they prepared spices and ointments, and on the Sabbath day they rested, according to the commandment."

The Body of our Lord is ever guarded by our Lady, for the Body of our Lord is the Church, and she is its mother. In the eyes of the world, it is fit only to be put out of sight, so mangled and disfigured is It with blows, endured in the struggle with its enemies. But It is precious and beautiful to the eyes of faith, and our Lady desires that we claim It as our own. We must be bold in our petition for It ; we must risk something, and be ready to risk all to possess this pearl of great price.

The world claims to be lord of all things, lord even of the Church, the Body of Christ, but it cannot deny us our membership of it. It may satisfy itself, as Pilate did, that the Body of Christ is dead, and worthless : but that Body possesses the seeds of life, and seems to die only to rise again, without spot or wrinkle. May our possession of the gift of Faith, our membership of the one true Church, be as true a source of joy and thankfulness to us, as was the possession of our Lord's Body to Joseph Arimathea. Let us ask for it "boldly," possess it "boldly," preach

it "boldly," make sacrifices for it "boldly." Again, the Body of Christ is the Blessed Sacrament. Our Lady desires us to possess that also ; but before we dare make it our own, we must be rich in purity and free from all affection for sin, and then "lay our Lord in a sepulchre hewn out of a rock," the hard rock of the love of self, and "roll a great stone to the door of the sepulchre," the great stone of firm resolve, of consecration of self, of avoidance of evil occasions, that the graces received may find no escape, that not one be found void. So, beneath our Lady's gaze let us "take this gift from God, wherewith to overthrow our adversaries."

A good Communion takes our Lord off His Cross by its spirit of reparation. And when we have received Him, in our few moments of thanksgiving, let us place Him in the arms of our Lady, as Joseph of Arimathea did on Calvary, commanding to her safe keeping the Communion we have just made, and all we shall ever make, bidding her intercede that their blemishes be wiped away, that all may stand to our credit, and never one of them to our shame. Priests are bidden, before saying Mass, to ask our Lady to stand by them as they celebrate the holy Sacrifice, even as she stood at the foot of the Cross ; and after Mass, they are bidden consign what they have dared to do into our Lady's hands, that all blemishes be removed. The laity may well do the same with regard to their Communions, and they will, like Joseph of Arimathea, be "noble counsellors," "rich towards God," "disciples of Jesus," "looking for the Kingdom of God."

There is a further light which we may gather from this closing scene on Calvary. "Joseph," we are told, "rolled a great stone to the door of the monument, and went his way," but "Mary Magdalen

was sitting over against the sepulchre." The sharp *juxta-position* of these two statements is very marked and suggests a useful lesson. Both did what was right, yet how differently! We may well suppose that many things claimed Joseph's attention in Jerusalem that evening. He was not a man of leisure, and the great Sabbath day would certainly be a busy one. So he "went his way" from Calvary, but Mary Magdalen, having more leisure, remained "sitting over against the sepulchre." The call of duty took Joseph away, and he becomes to us a type of a man who sanctifies his life by the duties of the day, all done for God. He begins his day with prayer, but then must leave Christ for Christ, and find out Lord in other tasks that await him. His religion is "pure and undefiled;" "he keeps himself unspotted from this world," and though in the world, he is not of it. By example, by principle, by perseverance in the vocation in which he is called, he does untold good. There may not be long hours of prayer and devotion, but "he is a good and just man" "not consenting to the counsels and doings" of the enemies of the Cross of Christ; he does what he has to do, and all is done for our Lord, and "he goes his way." We may see here an indication of the easy ways of divine love, and gain a lesson of encouragement to bear the burden of the day and the heats more bravely. Let those take special comfort who are tried by dryness in prayer. Their danger is to look too much for sweetness and consolation. They would like, with St. Mary Magdalen, to stay and weep by the Tabernacle, where the Body of our Lord is laid. Yet Mary Magdalen left the sepulchre, even as Joseph had done, for the great Sabbath was at hand, and she must be in the city, where "she rested according to the commandment."

We are labourers in the vineyard, and our sweetness and consolation are reserved for the end. The wine of peace is not given at first but at the end, and it is our duty to serve God in the place and vocation in which we are called, by simple, hard, monotonous work, "good and faithful servants," obedient, simple-minded, trustful, reverent, and lowly, finding our Lord in all, until He calls us to Himself, when a stone shall be rolled to the door of our monument, and friends shall go their way, and we shall have found a home in Paradise, where the weary in strength are at rest, where every tear is wiped from every eye.

## CHAPTER XLIX

### OUR LADY AT THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS

"Till the day break and the shadows retire, I will go to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense."—(Canticle iv, 6.)

THERE are many scenes in the life of our Lord of which we fain would know far more than holy Scripture tells us, but the silences and brevity of the sacred narrative debar us from much which it will be among the joys of heaven to ascertain. And among these scenes we may give a foremost place to the Descent of our Lord from the Cross, of which the narrative is most brief, as though the sacred writers hurried over their task, even as the event itself was in a way hurried and rapid, for "evening was come," and the Great Sabbath had almost begun when devout men "must rest according to the commandment." Only two are mentioned as being concerned with this deed of love and reparation—Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus; there is not one word about St. Mary Magdalen or the beloved Disciple, not one word about her who throughout the three hours "stood by the Cross of Jesus." That she was present, who can doubt? nay, that she was, in some sense, in command of the sacred Ceremony, directing, blessing, thanking all who took part—such we

may well suppose to have been the case. At Bethlehem she had done work of the kind now needed,—“she had wrapped Him in swaddling clothes”—“she had laid Him in a manger”—shall she not now use the fine linen, which Joseph of Arimathea has brought, and lay Him in the tomb?—At least “she saw the place where they laid” the Body of her Son.

The Sacred Passion, as the instrument of man’s Redemption, had ever been the theme of Mary’s thoughts and prayers. “She looked for the consolation of Israel,” and knew that on Him “the chastisement of our peace must rest.” Holy Simeon’s words had but expressed concisely what she already well knew—that her Child was to be “a sign that shall be contradicted,” and that “her own soul a sword should pierce.” At Nazareth, our Lord must have spoken to her concerning His mission to the world, and the price He must pay to make it fruitful of eternal good. Of His fulness our Lady then received a good measure. And now she had witnessed every scene and detail of the sacred Passion, and calmly has she gone forth to Calvary, “till the day break” on Easter morning, “till the shadows retire” from Calvary, “till the sun rise” on the empty tomb, with angels around to explain and direct. “I will go to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.”

All through the night in which her Son was betrayed, she had known no rest; He was at a distance from her, but she knew that He was being “despised and rejected,” and by spittings and many a blow rendered “the most abject of men.” When next day they met face to face, there was “no beauty left for any to desire Him.” She saw the marks of the scourges, and gazed at the mock crown

of thorns ; she heard the people cry for Barabbas in preference to her Son, she heard Him condemned to be crucified. On the road to Calvary they met, and the Mother felt to the full the awful pain of being unable to do ought but witness, adore, and pray. The Crucifixion followed before her eyes, and the three hours on the Cross, while she kept guard. Were not those three hours as a very eternity ? How slowly the moments advanced, so full was each of mystery and of pain ! And now they have drawn their weary length to the end ; the seven words have been spoken, and " Mary has kept them all, pondering them in her heart;" and our Lord has died, close to His Mother, His head bent in obedience to the Father's will, His head inclined towards His Mother, as when an infant in sleep at Bethlehem ! But it is not yet the end. There are instant tokens of haste, for death has been slow in coming, so they seem to think, and even now has come to but one of the three. Break their legs—do it quickly—and they will soon die. And it was done—it was done to that first Martyr, the fruit of Mary's prayers, but it shall not be done to her Son—"they shall not break a bone of Him"—yet the Sacred Side is opened with a spear, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled which saith : "They shall look on Him whom they have pierced."

Then came a change ; the hill of Calvary is slowly cleared, as "all the multitude of them that were come together to that sight, and saw the things that were done, returned striking their breasts." Enemies slink away, and there is an advent of friends ; the stream of converts begins to swell, and makes glad the city of God. Joseph of Arimathea has gone to Pilate boldly, and "begged the body of Jesus," and had gained his coveted boon. He has also bought

much fine linen. No one had asked him so to do ; was it Mary's prayers ? Nicodemus, too, has spent a large sum on myrrh and aloes, and brought one hundred pounds weight. No one asked him so to do ; was it Mary's prayers ? And their work of love is done before the Mother's eyes. What her hands found to do, what words she spoke, if any—none of these things do we know ; yet, her spirit rejoiced in God her Saviour, as she welcomed Joseph and Nicodemus, those "good and just men," and saw in the reverence and devotion of all around a type of what shall be shown to the end of time to the Body of her Prodigal in the Sacrament of His Love. So is the scene on Calvary transfigured in glory, before the eyes of angels and of men ; a moment before, and it was a very battle-field, where demons raged and devised vain thoughts, but now it is filled with the peace and repose of the House of God. It is as the sanctuary of a church ; there is the Body of our Lord, wrapped in swaddling clothes of clean linen : there is the Altar with the Cross erect, and held in esteem, there are sinners gathered around : and there is the Mother of holy hope, directing all, looking well to the paths of her household, the mistress of the ceremonies, to whom all look for direction as to what is to be done. And so to each one is assigned his task ; the nails are extracted with care and devotion, and the sacred Body of our Lord is lowered from the Cross, and placed in Mary's arms. Once more, as at Bethlehem of old, they that are gathered around, find the Child with Mary its Mother. And our Lady rejoices in God her Saviour, for the Scripture is fulfilled, that from the crown of His head to the sole of His foot there is no soundness in Him. And she says to those around : "He loved you, and delivered Himself for you. O all

ye that pass by the way, stay and see if there be any sorrow like unto mine. I grieve for Thee, exceeding beautiful and amiable to me above the love of women. As a mother loveth her only son, so did I love Thee." "Forget not the kindness of thy surety : for He hath given His life for thee. Unto you it is now given for Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him," for "if you partake of the sufferings of Christ, rejoice that when His glory shall be revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. Christ having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought. My beloved children, be ye steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord ; wherefore till for you the day break and the shadows retire, go to the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense."

It is not long since to our Lady has been given by our Lord a new office, a new name, and a new dignity, when He said to her from the Cross : "Woman behold thy son." She has but now been proclaimed the mother of sinners, and the descent of that mangled Body into Mary's arms is the divinely-devised object-lesson to her as to her fresh task. When she was only the Mother of Him "who did no sin, in whose mouth no guile was found," she held her Child in her arms, but then He was without scar or wound—the most beautiful among the sons of men ; but now Jesus has "become sin," and Mary is the mother of sinners, and must learn in the wounds of Christ the ravages which sin can make in a human soul. Thus must she learn how vast is her new field of labour, how awful the new dignity conferred upon her. The descent of our Lord's Body into her arms ordains her the Mother of holy hope,

that they who have sown in tears, as her Son has done, may reap in joy, that by the healing of the Precious Blood sinners may be turned into saints. So may our Lady now look on all around, and say : “ My little children, of whom I am in labour, until Christ be formed in you.”

The sacred Body of our Lord descending from the Cross into our Lady’s arms, turns our thoughts to our past lives, where, as in His many wounds, we may read the story of our failures and infidelities to grace. There is the spittle of the scorn with which gracious calls to virtue have been rejected ; there are the bruises left by our want of kindness to others ; there are the open wounds of wilful offences against God. It is a burden too great for us to bear ; so let us carry it to our Lady, in St. Peter’s spirit of humble shame, and fresh life, born of the pardon of God and the peace of Christ, will arise within us, dispelling all discouragement, while there remains within us that abiding sorrow for sin, which is among the most precious endowments of a human soul. A resting-place for our past life, with all the thoughts it suggests, and all the regrets it brings, is a need of us all, and the Heart of Mary can bear its burden and ease its sting ; let us then avail ourselves of it.

Every day of our lives is, or should be, a Good Friday. Our Holy Saturday, our time in the Limbo of the just, has not yet come, still less has our Easter festival dawned. The sun has not yet risen, but there is darkness over all the earth, for it is our Good Friday, our day to be mocked and scourged, to bear our Cross, to be crucified, to die to self, and so to suffer with Christ. St. Paul says : “ I die daily, I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body,” and we should say the same. But when the evening of each Good Friday comes, “the bodies must not

remain on the Cross," and so let us take down the Body of the Day's work, wounded and disfigured as perchance it is by want of fidelity, as the Body of our Lord was wounded for our sins. Let us take down the Body of our Day's sorrow and joy, work and recreation, rejoicing that it was done and accomplished on the cross, for thus alone is it welcome to our Lord, and place it in our Lady's safe keeping. Let the evening of each day in this vale of tears be spent in the company of our Lady, the mother of sorrows, for she is the Mother of holy hope, and upon the output of each day there shall be poured from her sweetness the oil of gladness to heal all blemishes, and to bless and encourage yet further work for God on the morrow.

## CHAPTER L

### JERUSALEM ON THE NIGHT OF THE FIRST GOOD FRIDAY

"AND all the multitude of them that were come together to that sight, and saw the things that were done, returned striking their breasts." (St. Luke xxiii, 48.) We are indebted to St. Luke alone for this pictorial verse, describing the doings and feelings of those who had been present at the Crucifixion of our Lord. Most of them had probably been witnesses of the scene of the "Ecce Homo" before the house of Pilate, and had heard our Lord condemned to death. From various reasons they had followed Him to Calvary, some out of mere curiosity, "to see the end," others perchance from sympathy, or with a desire to see where the truth really lay. Such opposite opinions had been expressed; our Lord had publicly been called a malefactor and a just man on the same day—which of the two is correct?

So they reached Calvary, moved no doubt by the example of the holy women, who had "bewailed and lamented" our Lord on the way. They were witnesses of the crucifixion, and the shrieks of agony of the two robbers crucified with our Lord had fallen on their ears; they saw the crosses erected in mid air, and heard the blasphemies from many a tongue;

"Vah ! Thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it ! Come down from the cross, and then we will believe in thee."

They have remained on Calvary during the three hours, and have heard and seen all. They have heard the words that fell from the lips of our Lord ; they have noted the rage and fury of His enemies, and by contrast His patience and meekness ; they have heard one of the robbers deride Him, they have heard the other defend Him, and appeal to Him as His Lord and King ; they have seen the Blessed Mother standing by the cross of her Son, true to the end ; they have seen our Lord, a worm and no man, with no soundness in Him, yet never complaining, for "when He was reviled, He did not revile ; when He suffered, He threatened not."

All this they have seen for three long hours, and how much more they saw and heard, we shall never know in this world. St. Luke, with the adorable reticence that characterises all Scripture, speaks of "such a sight," and "of things that were done ;" it is left for us to fill in the picture, as best we may.

Certainly, but little would escape their notice at such a time and in such a place. Their eyes and ears were open, and the very purpose of their journey was to observe all that came before them. And all the while the darkness of the eclipse was on the increase, and it was but the sixth hour of the day when it began. New thoughts began to arise in their minds ; is this right ? they would ask, who is to blame ? will such deeds pass by unpunished and unavenged ? The very face of nature is being disturbed ; we have been misled, we have been "doing a great evil against our souls." A few hours ago we cried : "His blood be upon us and upon our children." What have we done by that cry ?

Ought not Barabbas to be on that cross, and not Jesus of Nazareth ? “The wicked are like the raging sea which cannot rest ; and a troubled conscience always forecasteth grievous things.”

And now the three hours are gone by, and with a loud voice our Lord has given up the Ghost ; the veil of the Temple, so they are told, is rent in two from the top to the bottom, the earth begins to shake, and the rocks to split ; the Centurion cries out : “indeed this man was the Son of God.” They began to weep for themselves and for their children, and to realise that if in the green wood such things are done, that even greater may be done in the dry. They can endure to stay on Calvary no longer, and so “all the multitude of them that were come together to that sight, and saw the things that were done, returned, striking their breasts.” Let us go with them, and watch the anxious faces of those we meet, and read their thoughts.

They have now reached Jerusalem, the city of God, the city of prayer, of sacrifice, and of worship ; its very stones and memories are sacred ; it is the store-house of all prophecy, and all prophecy centres in the Desired of all nations. It is the centre of the believing world of that day, and “devout men” are there from every country under heaven. Religion is the very atmosphere of the place ; Moses, David, Isaias, Jeremias, and John the Baptist are the names spoken of with reverence, and held in honour—but what are these without Jesus Christ ? Do they not all point to Him ? So these devout men began to reflect, and the way seemed almost open for the great inflow of converts on the first Whit Sunday—not so far distant. But what has happened to-day ? Simply this : three men have been killed, cruelly and in haste. Every legal form has been broken, all sense of justice has

been violated. No one in that city expected the death of any of the three the night before ; not even Caiaphas and his company, keenly as they may have desired it, and the least hope of so quickly accomplishing the object of their desire. They themselves had said : "let it not be done on the festival day, lest perchance there be a tumult amongst the people." Yet, that morning, solemn voices were heard from the Temple roof giving forth the well-known formula : "Pray for those condemned to die to-day," and all is accomplished, without mercy, without thought, and the evening is come, and the very earth groans beneath the weight of iniquity perpetrated that day.

And thus in the streets and homes of Jerusalem you may find on the first Good Friday night "all the multitude of them that had come together to that sight on Calvary." They have "seen the things that were done, and have returned, striking their breasts," for now there has arisen within them that sense of right and justice, which never wholly dies within a man. Conscience is speaking, and exercising its resistless sway ; conscience is reproving, and asking : "what have you done to-day ? Is God pleased or the reverse ?" and the answer must be given. "The spirit of a man is the lamp of the Lord, which searches all the hidden things of the heart." Even in the house of Pilate there is this feeling, for he knows full well that he has added yet another crime to his long list. He sought to appease and gratify the Jews, but he has failed, and his wife reminds him of the warning she gave him earlier in the day. "Why did you not keep your word ? Why did you not take my warning, and prevent the death of this Man from whom in my dream I suffered so much to-day, and whom you your self declared repeatedly to be just and innocent ?"

And what of Caiaphas and Annas and their

associates ? Those men, well versed in the Law and the Prophets, knew full well that One had stood in the midst of them, who corresponded in every detail with what had been foretold of Him. They knew that He was to be a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief, led as a lamb to the slaughter, not opening His mouth. They knew that they were the custodians of the Law, and the leaders of those who looked for the consolation of Israel ; but they had “resisted the Holy Ghost, and been the betrayers and murderers of the Just One, even as their fathers had persecuted the Prophets,” who foretold His coming. They had “received the Law by the disposition of Angels, and had not kept it,” and now in the torn veil of the Temple they must needs recognise that their day is over, that the Blood of the Saviour of the world is upon them, for they have rejected One whose fan is in His hand, who will thoroughly cleanse His floor, who will baptise the world with the Holy Ghost and with fire, who will bring “evil men to an evil end, and will let out His vineyard to other husbandmen, who will render Him the fruit in due season.”

So the city of Jerusalem is stirred, and where can we find a house for prayer and rest on this awful night ? Let us go to the home of the mother of Mark, where there is the large dining-room furnished, and where there is prayer and peace. Our Lady is there, the centre of all, taking her new children to her own. At her side are Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who have laid our Lord to rest. The Apostles, too, are present now, though all save “the disciple whom Jesus loved ” had been absent from Calvary. There, too, is Simon of Cyrene, who carried the cross for our Lord, and Veronica who wiped His face. There, too, and Mary Martha, and her sister Mary Magdalen are Lazarus, whom Jesus loved. There, too, we,

meet the mother of the sons of Zebedee, who not so long ago had asked that her sons might reign on the right and on the left of our Lord, seated on the best thrones in His kingdom. She does not make the same petition now. A new light has come, for in our Lord's sacred Passion, the chalice of pain, the cross of failure and humility, the silence of sanctity, the obedience of the will, the being a servant stand out as the only fitting portion for herself and for her sons. "All these were persevering with one mind in prayer, with Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren." Our Lady, "the mother of knowledge," speaks to them of her Son, and so "the great and manifest day of the Lord" closes for them in peace and thankfulness. Indeed on that evening the friends of our Lord "sit in the beauty of peace, and in the tabernacles of confidence, and in wealthy rest." A fresh theme of praise has been furnished, that shall be the basis of men's thought and the guide of men's lives until the consummation of the world. From henceforth they shall "know no one but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified"; they shall "live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved them, and delivered Himself for them"; they now "look on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who having joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and now sitteth on the right hand of God." They shall "think diligently upon Him that endureth such opposition from sinners against Himself that they be not wearied, fainting in their minds." So in peace they prepare for the great Sabbath day, on which "they rested, according to the commandment."

But, outside this circle of friends, all is confusion and uneasiness. The reality of what has been done in a measure now comes home to the minds of many; they have sought "to justify themselves before men, but God knoweth their hearts," (St. Luke xvi, 15);

they are among “the sinful men who flee reproof, and seek to find an excuse according to their will.” The priests know that they have been blind guides, who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. “There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, nor hidden that shall not be known.” The truth shall appear, and “the Almighty will look into the causes of every one,” for “He will not accept any person against a poor man, and He will hear the prayer of him that is wronged.”

Such were among the thoughts and feelings of many in Jerusalem on the night of the first Good Friday, and they are the thoughts and feelings of many to-day, for every day is a Good Friday. Every day men are “crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, making Him a mockery”: every day they scourge Him with impurity, and crown Him with thorns by obstinacy and pride, and spit on Him by neglect and contempt, and make Him thirst by intemperance. They seem to carry all before them, and to gain the day; but wait until the evening, and then that saving voice is heard, and that resistless force exerts its sway—the voice and the force of Conscience—and who then are at peace?

“Conscience hath a thousand several tongues  
And every tongue brings in a ‘several tale.’”

In a word, “by what things a man sinneth, by the same also is he tormented. If our hearts do not reprehend us, we have confidence towards God, and a secure mind is like a continual feast.” We must needs have the support and protection of that strongest breast-plate, a heart untainted, for “our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity of heart and sincerity of God, and not in carnal wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conversed in this world.”

## CHAPTER LI

### GOOD FRIDAY NIGHT IN THE CENACLE

FROM the sixth to the ninth hour on this great Day there was darkness as of Egypt, in the final scene of the battle between the Author of Life and the prince of Death. But the storm is now spent, and already the light of victory begins to shine. The work of God for men is finished ; He has not spared His only Son, but provided Himself a victim for the holocaust. As a lamb led to the slaughter, dumb before its shearer, He opened not His mouth, but was struck for the wickedness of God's people, for the Lord had laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. Having joy set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame, and the end has come, nobly and in peace. Despised and the most abject of men, He has borne our infirmities to the grave, and by His bruises we are healed.

And thus as children bought with a great price, as new-born babes desiring the milk of God's word, with a new name written on our foreheads, as the brethren of Jesus, and the children of Mary, we go in spirit to that "large and well-furnished room" in God's city, where the Blessed Sacrament first rested and was given as food, and where our Lady has found her place of rest. She has met her Son to-day

bearing His own Cross, she has heard the sound of hammer and of blows, she has stood by the Cross through the long three hours, enduring a martyrdom great as the sea ; she has closed the eyes of her Child in death, and followed Him to the grave—the only son of His mother, and she a widow. Calvary no longer claims her presence, but Jerusalem does. She must be ever busy for the cause of her Son, and so she returns from His bed of death, with His last tender mandate ringing in her ears—to be the mother of those for whom His Blood had been shed. And to her there comes the prince of penitents—St. Peter, weeping bitterly, to acknowledge his repeated falls and many denials. He begs the holy Mother to tell him the Master's last words, for he had been too ashamed to go to Calvary, and hence had never heard them. Our Lady heard them all, and kept them in her heart, and in the peace of Good Friday night she rehearses them to her children. She pours them forth as a summary of the life which her Son, the most beautiful among the children of men, had lived, and which He had come on earth to enforce.

"And Jesus said : Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Bearing His own Cross, He went forth to the place called Calvary, clad in His own robes, accompanied by a great multitude, greedy to see the end, goaded on by a fury that blinded them to all sense of justice. "What thou dost, do quickly," our Lord had said, and quickly all had taken place. The trials were a very mockery in their brevity, all evidence was hushed, the sentence was decided upon before any tribunal was approached, the punishments fell thick as hail on the Body of our Lord. After the long journey, He was stripped of His robes, and before His mother's eyes was laid on His bed of death. Quickly the nails were

produced, and driven cruelly through hands and feet, and the Cross was erected in mid-air ! For some hours our Lord kept silence, but at length He spoke, and His first word is one that sums up His life, and embodies the lesson above all others that He came to teach. "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that persecute and calumniate you." He had said in His first Sermon on the Mount : "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," He said in His last sermon from the Cross. His preaching does not vary, for He is Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, and for ever. "A new commandment, therefore, He gives to us, that we should love one another, as He has loved us." This is the foundation of holiness, even as it is its crown. How do our lives appear when viewed in the strong, penetrating light of the First Word ? Is there within us the spirit of forgiveness, do we try to appreciate one another, to magnify all that is good, to minimise all that is defective, to speak well of all, to speak kindly to all, to think well of all, to pass over wrongs, to forgive and to forget, not nursing grievances and the deadly spirit of envy and revenge, but bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ, promulgated and enthroned for ever in the First Word from the Cross : "Father, forgive them, for they know not what to do ?" This is the charity of Christ which presseth us.

"And one of those robbers who were hanged said to Jesus : Lord remember me when thou shalt come into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said to him, Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." Our Lord came to seek and to save that which was lost ; His name was Jesus, for he saved His people from their sins. His glory is to pass over wrongs, and the noblest example of this was given on

Calvary. Who could have surmised that one of those robbers who was hanged should before the close of that day be numbered with the saints and friends of God? Nay, that from his bed of death, to all the world, he should preach Jesus Christ, and Him crucified?

He had led a bad life, and his death was accelerated that he might die with our Lord, and so add to the ignominy of the spectacle. He had been cruelly scourged—and thus, in no agreeable mood, he met our Lord for the first time. No one could stop his tongue, and he blasphemed our Lord, as did the other thief. But the Lord, turning, looked upon him, and loved him. He heard the first word, which came as a flood of light to him. "No man ever spake as this man," he said. By the power of charity his conversion began, and it advanced through holy fear, to a humble acknowledgment of his deeds. He did not say, like Pilate, "I am innocent of the blood of this just man, look you to it," he only said: "It is I who have caused this just man to suffer, look you to it." And then with trust and hope he added: "Lord, remember me, when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom." "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise," was the reply. Here is the second element in our spiritual life. We must turn to God by a conversion genuine and sincere, cleansing our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. God is not mocked. If our right hand scandalise us, we must cut it off; if our right eye scandalise us, we must pluck it out. We live in the world, but we must not be of it; we are to be the light and salt of the earth, preaching Christ crucified, suffering with Him, that hereafter we may reign with Him. Our light is to shine before men, that they may see our good works, and so glorify our Father who is in heaven. Are we, then, still trying to serve two masters?

"Woman, behold thy son : son, behold thy Mother." When our Lord was hanging on the Cross, and near His end, He possessed one thing and only one—His blessed Mother. His Body He had bestowed upon His Church at the Last Supper, and to that Church He will now bequeath His last possession. So our Lady was needed at the foot of the Cross, not for work that seemed ready to her hand, not to nurse her Child, but for work prepared for her by her Son, to fulfil her joy in God her Saviour, to give all generations fresh ground for calling her blessed. "Behold, my Beloved speaketh to me : Arise, make haste, My love, My dove, My beautiful one and come : the winter is past, the rain is over and gone flowers are appearing in our land ; till the day break and the shadows retire, we will feed among the lilies ; My work is done, charity is set in order, the storm is spent, heaven is opened, Woman, behold thy son, son, behold thy Mother." Her answer is : "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word." So did our Lady stand on the right hand of our crucified Lord, "in gilded clothing, full of grace, surrounded with variety" : so did she on Calvary "become established in the holy City of God, and took root in an honourable people." And instantly and generously did she accept the work assigned to her by our Lord. This is our third lesson, to take to our own from the hand of our Lord whatever work He sends us, whatever trials He wills should come upon us, to accept all, to regard all with the love of a mother for an only child. Might not our Lady have pleaded, when at the ninth hour on Calvary she should close the eyes of her Son in death, that her work on earth was done ? might she not beg then to be dissolved, and to be with her Son, so that even in death they should not be divided ? Is the Good Thief

who an hour ago did not know our Lord, or knew Him only to revile Him—is he to go that night to his rest in Paradise, and Mary, the Mother of the King, to stay, and labour on, and be busy with much serving of children, most wayward and foolish? Yes, so it was to be; the ways of God are strange, and not as our ways. And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to Thy word—and took us to her own from that hour. “The life of a labourer that is content with what he hath, shall be sweet, and in it he shall find a treasure.”

“And Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” At His agony in the garden, our Lord prayed to His Father that the chalice might pass, if possible; but that prayer had not been granted. And now that to the very dregs the chalice has been drunk, there came upon the human soul of our Lord a sense of desolation, a conviction of failure, that all had been in vain, that there was no usefulness in His Blood, for, in spite of its shedding, many when weighed in the balance would be found wanting, and it would be better for them if they had not been born. So our Lord rehearsed before the eyes of His Father all that He had undergone: His prayer is bold and comprehensive, yet submissive. “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? I cry and Thou dost not hear: I am a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people: they laugh Me to scorn, they wag their heads at Me; I am poured out like water, and all My bones are scattered; My strength is dried up like a potsherd, My tongue hath cleaved to My jaws; they have dug My hands and My feet, they have numbered all My bones: My God, my God, look upon Me: why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

So did He pray on His Cross, "with a strong cry and tears, and He was heard for His reverence." Prayer in the hour of need and desolation was our Lord's food and strength, and it must be the same for us. Our petitions must be made known to God, for of ourselves we are not sufficient to think anything ; our sufficiency is from God, but from God who will be entreated in favour of His servants, and whose ears are open and attentive to the voice of their supplication. We must "commit our way to God" in earnest prayer. But because prayer is a means to an end, an expression of goodwill, the formulating of solemn promises and generous undertakings, it is neglected. "Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full; be instant in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving."

"Jesus said : I thirst." The torment of thirst is the keenest that man can experience, and no thirst was ever equal to that of our Lord. The tender revelation of this pain was made into Mary's ear, and she was unable to relieve it at all. She could but hope that if the bodily thirst of our Lord, endured to atone for sins of intemperance and unkind speech, could not be relieved, at least His spiritual thirst may be amply quenched. This word "I thirst" is in very truth a summary of our Lord's life. Did He not say : "I have a baptism wherewith to be baptised, and how am I straightened until it be accomplished?" Did He not say, "I have come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I that it be enkindled ?" Is not His one thought and question : "What more, O My vineyard, is there that I can do for thee, and have not done it ?"—The Incarnation itself is a step prompted by Divine thirst to succour those who could not help themselves. Are not the life at Bethlehem, the labours of Nazareth, the three years of toil and preaching, all explained by this word ?

And the Sacred Passion above all, is but a thirsting appeal for the love of men, that ought to receive no refusal. The Sacrament of Penance, the gift of the Blessed Sacrament, the gift of our Lady as our Mother, of Angels and Saints as our protectors, all are stamped with this word. "I thirst" must be our spirit too. Nothing good is done in this world without generosity. There is a zeal among the enemies of the Cross, which carries men with it : is there not to be the same among its friends ? "Know you not that they who run the race, refrain themselves from all things?"

"Jesus therefore, when He had taken the vinegar, said : It is consummated." The sixth word of our Lord from the Cross closes the whole work of our Lord for men, and challenges them to convict Him of sin or of any deficiency. Our Lord came to do His Father's will, and to do it has ever been His meat, from Bethlehem to Calvary. He came to raise the sinner, to befriend the poor, to unite all men in one brotherhood, to bring all to the knowledge of the truth, to renew the face of the earth by the spirit of kindness, to come into our midst like rain upon the fleece, and as showers falling gently upon the earth, to be obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, and therefore to be exalted, and to be given a name which is above every Name, to blot out the handwriting that was against us, to roll back the eternal gates, to enter through them as the Lord mighty in battle, leading with Him a great multitude which no man can number, out of every tribe and nation, and it has been done. "It is consummated." "Father, I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do." The sixth word proclaims the work of our Lord to be worthy of God, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Nobody is forgotten, there are gifts and messages for all ; for the young and old for

the sick and the strong, for the rich and the poor, for those in high station and for the lowly, for those who rejoice, for those who mourn. It is consummated. So must it be with us. "Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour, till the evening." Every moment of time can be used for God, and for every moment an account must one day be rendered. What threatens and mars the finish of our work for God ? First of all, waste of time, which renders our service so intermittent, especially waste of time in idle gossip and unkind talk ; secondly, impatience, a fevered restlessness with ourselves and our task, a tendency to quarrel with God and His demands, leading to irritability with others, and issuing in discouragement, lethargy, tepidity, and inaction, that blight our days, and spoil the work our Father in heaven gave us to do.

"Be patient until the coming of the Lord, for patience hath a perfect work. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, patiently bearing till he receive the early and the latter rain. Expect the Lord, do manfully, and let thy heart take courage, and wait thou for the Lord, that, at His coming, you be found watching, as faithful servants, your lamps trimmed, ready to enter into the joy of your Lord, having finished the work He gave you to do."

"And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said : Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." At His Last Supper, our Lord had said : "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world : again I leave the world, and I go to the Father, and you shall see Me no longer." And now that all is accomplished, He has but to bow His head in obedience to that Father's Will. Let the great Past come before us now, for it is fair to the eyes and lovely to behold,

Our Lord has gone about doing good, a friend to many ; He has given gifts to men ; He has glorified the Father and refreshed the earth ; He has bequeathed in the Blessed Sacrament His sacred presence to us. And crying with a loud voice, He said : "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit,"—and so He died—a death precious in the sight of God, because of its perfect peace, because of its harmony with His life. Death is always bitter, for it is a punishment, and separates hearts that are knit together in love and friendship. Only the example and touch of our Lord can make it at all sweet and full of peace. Most men die as they have lived, and when that visitor knocks his dire summons at our door, and a voice says : "Go forth upon thy journey, Christian soul," nothing will then avail but a life of conformity to God's Will, a life of good habits, a life of which Duty is the watch-word and summary. So to live is Christ, and so to die will be gain. O Lord, make me know my end, and what is the number of my days that I may know what is wanting to me. Let me understand and provide for that last hour, that I may have hope in my death. Let my life give glory to God before it be dark, before my feet stumble upon the mountains, that, after a life clothed in habits of kindly deeds, my end may be full of peace, and I may fall asleep in the Lord, saying : "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," to find a welcome where the wearied in strength are at rest, in the kingdom of the just made perfect.

## CHAPTER LII

### EASTER DAY

"AND on the Sabbath day they rested according to the commandment." This rest, with its prayer and close association with our Blessed Lady must have been a boon and refreshment to the disciples and friends of our Lord. It is not possible for us to realise the effect of the events of the first Good Friday on their minds. Our Lord had died a death of shame, and His tomb was sealed and guarded ; the Apostles had been scattered, and there was not one of them but had much for which to blame himself. All had fled, and deserted their Lord ; only one had stood by the Cross. Though the Passion had been so clearly predicted, the end of our Lord's life was utterly different from what they had expected and hoped. Surely it was one vast failure—there was not a sign of the kingdom that had been so much spoken of—every expectation seemed blighted, every sacrifice to have been made in vain—and all were unnerved, uncertain of the future, filled with sorrow and foreboding, while to the outside world they were branded as the friends and followers of One who was held to be "a seducer" of many.

A single day was all too short a time in which to recover from feelings such as these, and none of

them "understood the Scriptures, that He was to rise again." So "they talked together of all these things which had happened." "Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet, mighty in work and word before God and all the people, had been crucified. They had hoped that He should have redeemed Israel," but He did not seem to have done so, for "they were slow of heart to believe in all things which the Prophets had spoken." The thought that "Christ *ought* to have suffered these things, and *so* enter into His Glory" never found a home in their minds.

So that Great Sabbath day was spent, "persevering with one mind in prayer, with Mary the Mother of Jesus, and resting from labour according to the commandment, yet withal weak in faith and sorely troubled. But the enemies of the Cross did not thus spend the day. A small matter had escaped their notice, and they thought it well to take further precautions. So on "the next day, which followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying : "Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said, while He was yet alive : After three days I will rise again. Command therefore the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day : lest perhaps His disciples come, and steal Him away, and say to the people : He is risen from the dead ; and the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate saith to them : You have a guard ; go, guard it as you know. And they departing, made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting guards."

St. Matthew alone gives us an account of this strange incident. In it we find the old subservience to Pilate, the old hatred of our Lord, that manifested itself so strongly in the sacred Passion itself. "But

why do the nations rage, and the people devise vain things against the Lord, and against His Anointed ? He that dwelleth in Heaven shall laugh at them, and the Lord shall deride them.” The victory of the Resurrection is at hand, and “on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalen cometh early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre.”

Already “there had been a great earthquake, for an Angel of the Lord descended from Heaven, and coming, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. And his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow : and for fear of him, the guards were struck as dead men.” By the time the holy women reached the sepulchre, the sun was risen, and a difficulty presented itself to their minds. “And they said one to another : Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre ? And looking, they saw the stone rolled back. For it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe : and they were astonished. Who saith to them : Be not affrighted : you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified : He is risen, He is not here, behold the place where they laid Him. Why seek you the living with the dead ? He is not here, but is risen. Remember how He spoke unto you, when He was yet in Galilee, saying the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. But go tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee : there you shall see Him, as He told you. But they going out fled from the sepulchre. For a trembling and fear had seized them : and they said nothing to any man : for they were afraid. And going back from the sepulchre, they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.”—“St. Mary Magdalen ran

back, and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith to them : They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him."

How full of life and animation is the sacred narrative ! What a change has already come over the friends of our Lord ! St. Peter therefore "went out, and that other disciple, and they came to the sepulchre. And they both ran together, and that other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And when he stooped down, he saw the linen cloths lying, but yet he went not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and saw the linen cloths lying. And the napkin that had been about His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but apart, wrapped up into one place. Then that other disciple also went in, who came first to the sepulchre : and he saw, and believed." Since he had denied his Master, we may be sure St. Peter has neither slept, nor ate, nor drank. He has continued to weep bitterly, but now his chance has come, and at once he seizes it. "I will arise, and will go to my Master ; since I denied Him, He has turned and looked upon me ; I know that my Redeemer liveth : I know that He will forgive me, but He must speak the word, that His servant may be healed." He ran as fast as his tired limbs would carry him ; he was weeping bitterly, tears half of shame, half of joy ; and as he ran, he would hastily wipe them away with his hands that bore the marks of honest toil, for he was looking for something he knew well—his Master's face, his Master's eye ; and soon he hoped to hear his Master's voice. Yet neither St. Peter nor St. John, his companion, met our Lord : He is risen, He is not there : "and the disciples departed again to their home."

So the day wore on, a day of excitement and uncertainty. St. Thomas seems to have grown tired of waiting and hearing rumours, so that he was not with the Eleven when eventually our Lord did appear to them ; and two of the disciples went to Emmaus, as though anxious to get away from Jerusalem and the strain of the whole affair. Our Lord met these on their journey, but "their eyes were held, that they should not know Him." And He said to them : "What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk, and are sad ? And the one of them, whose name was Cleophas, answering, said to Him : Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days ? To whom He said : 'What things ? And they said : Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in work and word before God and all the people ; and how our chief priests and princes delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we hoped, that it was He that should have redeemed Israel : and now besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company affrighted us, who before it was light, were at the sepulchre, and not finding His body, came saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say that He is alive. And some of our people went to the sepulchre, and found it so as the women had said, but Him they found not. Then He said to them : O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory ? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the scriptures, the things that were concerning Him. And they drew nigh to the town whither they were

going : and He made as thou He would go farther. But they constrained Him, saying : Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent, and He went in with them. And it came to pass, whilst He was at table with them, He took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him : and He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to the other : Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He spoke in the way, and opened to us the scriptures ? And rising up, the same hour, they went back to Jerusalem ; and they found the eleven gathered together, and those that were with them, saying, the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way ; and how they knew Him in the breaking of bread. Now whilst they were speaking these things, Jesus stood in the midst of them, and saith to them : Peace be to you ; it is I, fear not. And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. But they being troubled and frightened, supposed that they saw a spirit. And He said to them : Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts ? See My hands and My feet, that it is I myself : handle and see : for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me to have. And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and feet. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord. He said therefore to them again : Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. When He had said this, He breathed on them, and He said to them : Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them ; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."

Some time in the day previously, our Lord had

appeared to St. Mary Magdalen (St. John xx, 11), and then to many others, saying "All hail," and "they came up to Him, and took hold of His feet, and adored Him."

Meanwhile the news of the Resurrection had spread in Jerusalem, to the great alarm of the chief priests and ancients, for "some of the guards came into the city, and told the chief priests all things that had been done. And they being assembled together with the ancients, taking counsel, gave a great sum of money to the soldiers. Saying : Say you, His disciples came by night, and stole Him away when we were asleep. And if the governor shall hear of this, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they taking the money, did as they were taught, and this word was spread abroad among the Jews even unto this day." The chief priests knew well the truth of what they heard ; to doubt it never occurred to them ; so they "take counsel." It must be hushed up at all costs, and explained away, for to allow these men to tell their story in the city will be fatal. "What are we to do ?" Money has helped them before ; money bought Judas to their side ; money shall help them again, but it will cost more this time. Thirty pieces of silver will not suffice, far from it ; so they buy a lie with a "great sum" of sacred money ! "Iniquity hath lied to itself."

Such is the story of Easter Day, the fulfilment of our Lord's challenge to the world, of the sign by which He is to be known in all ages. "I have power to lay down My life, I have power to take it up again, and this is the sign that I give to a wicked and adulterous generation, the sign of Jonas the prophet." This sign has been given in every age to the world, in the perpetual resurrection from the dead of the Church, the mystical Body of Christ.

Every phase and aspect of the life of our Lord, is repeated in the life and work of Holy Church. She leads her hidden and her public life, as she goes about doing good ; she leads her suffering and her risen life ; she pours oil and wine into wounds, yet she is despised and rejected, betrayed by her own, and denied, called an agitator, a malefactor, a seducer, a false teacher ; she is brought before the world and tried at the world's tribunals, condemned, mocked and scourged, crowned with thorns, and reputed with the iniquitous. Yet the whole world goes after her, for she does many miracles, and lo ! she is alive, she is risen from the grave, and death has no dominion over her. Her enemies cannot deny it ; they gnash with their teeth and pine away, as their efforts to explain this strange phenomenon prove to be futile. Her periods of greatest stress have ever proved to be the antecedents of victory, even as the darkest hour is followed by the dawn.

It is Easter Day that raises our hearts to the kingdom of the just, to the mansion of rest and peace won and prepared for us by our Lord. It reveals the future to us, and thus renews our faith, makes firm our hopes, and enlarges our charity and zeal. Its brightness is only seen at its best when viewed from the darkness of the three hours on Good Friday. The two must go together for us, as for our Lady, as for our Lord. The pierced hands and feet and side of our risen Lord tell us the price to be paid for a victory over sin and evil, for an entrance into the land that flows with milk and honey. Let us imitate the welcome given to our Lord by His own on the First Easter Day ; let us "take hold of His feet, and adore Him," take hold of our work, our trials and difficulties, whether from ourselves or from others, and imprint upon them a

kiss of welcome, as the instruments of our passion, as the instruments that are to model us to the likeness of Jesus crucified, so that one day we may rise to the likeness of Jesus risen. The light of the Resurrection rests on the dark places of life, on all sorrows and sacrifices. "If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God : mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. . . . For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Walk worthy of God, in all things pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might according to the power of His glory, in all patience and long suffering with joy, giving thanks to God the Father, who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins. Count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord, that we may know Him, and the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, if by any means we, too, may attain to the resurrection which is from the dead, forgetting the things that are behind and stretching forth to those that are before, pressing towards the mark, to the prize of the supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

"We have not here a lasting city ; we look for one to come. That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which we are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things

which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. We seek a country, we are pilgrims and strangers upon earth: we desire a better, that is to say, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called our God, for He hath prepared for us a city. It hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him, as He is. If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, in like manner shall we be in the likeness of His Resurrection."

## CHAPTER LIII

### ST. MARY MAGDALEN IN THE HOURS OF THE SACRED PASSION

THE conversion of St. Mary Magdalen probably took place early in the Public Ministry of our Lord, about a year and a half before the end. No sinner is painted so black as she in all Scripture, no conversion is recorded more fully, no incident in the life of our Lord has helped and encouraged souls more than His pardon for the one “out of whom seven devils” had to be driven forth. What actually led her to our Lord we know not ; theologians say that she received a grace so great that it was not in her power to resist it—a grace that gave her no merit, but which at once placed her in a state in which she was able to merit greatly. But how true a conversion it was ! Convinced of her misdeeds and wasted life, stung by a sense of shame at the scandal she had given, yet confident that there was hope for her, she went into our Lord’s presence ; she went to Him, not He to her, and in public acknowledged her faults, and asked for pardon, and did what she could to make reparation and give proof of love. Up to that moment, our Lord had never accepted any gifts save those of the wise men from the East, but now He deigns to accept the tears and repeated kisses of a penitent, while the full

flow of the precious ointment betokened the sweet odour of virtue which she would fain exhibit in every day of her future life. From that hour to the end, Mary Magdalen "ministered to our Lord of her substance"—a work of devotion and generosity, involving much thought and many a journey, with never a thought for self. And during those months, she would learn much from our Lord, and her love for Him would grow, and her gratitude increase. But there are lessons wanting in these experiences, for the Cross has not yet cast its shadow on her path, though, like the other disciples, she was hearing of it more and more fully. And as the hour of the Sacred Passion drew near, she had anticipations that He whom she loves was going to suffer terribly, and alone and to suffer for her ! And her thought would be : "What fruit have I in those things of which I am now ashamed : the end of them is death : the end of them is to be the Master's death for me, for He loves me, and will deliver Himself for me."

So whilst there is time, she will anoint our Lord once more. He seemed to relish that service of love so warmly the first time it was rendered, and it shall be done a second time also. Then there fell on Magdalen's ears the words of her Master in her defence and praise, and also the assurance that the anointing was the anointing of One who was sick unto death. "It has been done beforehand for My burial." Yes, the end was very near !

Our Lord's hour had come in which He was to pass out of this world to the Father, and having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end. Who was His own more than His blessed Mother ? Who was His own in quite another way more than Mary Magdalen ? And these two shall be invited to share in a very close way in His Sacred

Passion. Mary Magdalen must be there to learn more fully the meaning of sin, and the depths of our Lord's love for sinners, and the ways of reparation. No doubt she and the other holy women were present at the second portion of the Last Supper, and received their First Communion at our Lord's hands. Then began the ordeal of the Passion, and Mary Magdalen would know of every detail: she would hear of the arrest of her Lord, of His return to the city, bound and guarded by the soldiers; she would be present at the scene outside Pilate's house, and hear him say: "I will chastise Him," and would see our Lord led away for the scourging! All this time she must have been in close company with our Lady. What an agony! To know that one has caused those stripes to fall, and to see at one's side the Mother of Him who is being thus made a worm and no man! It was a martyrdom for both, borne in silence, and the love of both for our Lord was growing.

So the Sacred Passion continued, and Mary Magdalen saw it all—the last appearance after the scourging, the final sentence amid the shrieks of the crowd, and then with our Lady to that place which is called Calvary. As before, she must bring a gift for our Lord, and there is but one she can bring. Precious ointment is now of no avail, but a soothing drink may be offered, and it has been prepared. Yet, when they reached Calvary, and the warm potion was given to our Lord, He tasted it, and would not drink! This tender refusal, made in order that He might suffer to the full, was a special sword thrust through Magdalen's soul in this hour, yet she would understand. The will was taken for the deed, and these were not the moments for sweetness in prayer and labour. Mary Magdalen must learn this lesson, and give praise in the learning, and under-

stand God's ways to be not as our ways, and that reparation often works by means which seem to us most strange and contrary.

So the three hours began, and Mary Magdalen is close to the Cross. Not for the first time has she knelt at the Master's feet, and learnt, for such is the better part which she had ever chosen. She knew that our Lord was suffering from thirst, and her potion is still there untouched, but it must not be offered again, and at the last she heard our Lord say : "I thirst."

So the three hours ran out, and the end has come. Her Master is dead, for death is the fruit of sin, and He has become sin to help her to live to God. The Body is taken from the Cross, and she can study its wounds awhile, and then follow It to the grave. She sees the place where It is laid, and leaves Calvary with our Lady, "and on the Sabbath day they rested according to the commandment."

She has learnt that to belong to our Lord means to suffer. His call is for us to enter the category of those who mourn, who face the facts of life, and those facts are written deep in His bruised flesh. His love and devotion to our cause as there depicted make the sacrifice involved seem but light, and the pain involved in obedience to the call seem sweet. But until "we know no one but Jesus Christ and Him crucified," we do not fully know Him, and to know Him is to suffer—the suffering of those who sow in tears, one day to reap in joy. "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him."

And now we may note a marked and beautiful similarity between the groupings of Calvary and those of the first Easter-day. The friends who were the last to see our Lord on Good Friday are the first to welcome Him in the glory of His Resurrection.

Our Lady is found in both scenes, closing the eyes of her dead Son, then gazing before all others (who can doubt it ?) into those eyes now replete with light and life. St. John, too, is in both, the first of the Apostles to reach the empty tomb, the only one to be found at the foot of the Cross. And sinners appear in both represented by Mary Magdalen, who "sat over against the sepulchre," who "beheld where the body of Jesus was laid," who "prepared spices and ointments," and who now "on the first day of the week, came early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which she had prepared. And she saw the stone taken away from the sepulchre. But going in, she found not the Body of the Lord." Not finding her Lord, she had run home to tell Simon Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved that some one had taken Him away, and she knew not where they had laid Him. She ran back, and "stood at the sepulchre without weeping." Then she thought she would look again, as though to make quite sure, so "she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre," and St. John tells us that her tears were flowing at the time. And now she saw "two Angels in white, sitting one at the head, and the one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid." The Angels said to her : "Woman, why weepest thou?" and she answered again : "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." Then "she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and she knew not that it was Jesus." "Her eyes were held, that she should not know Him." Our Lord asked her the same question as the Angels had done : "why weepest thou?" but He added : "whom seekest thou?" giving at once a personal touch to the question, calculated to call forth that personal love of Himself, which had been her

very food and stay. But Mary Magdalen thought He was the gardener, and so He was, for the fair garden of her soul owed its beauty and symmetry and fragrance to His gentle tilling. No weeds and bitter roots were there ; the winter was over and gone, and flowers and fruits grew in richness and variety. Mary's thought was true, and she said to the Gardener : "Sir, if thou has taken Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." Brave and generous soul, how could your arms bear such a load ? But love is strong, and many waters cannot quench its flame, nor crush its might ; true love never sees difficulties, never counts the cost.

Then "Jesus saith to her : Mary !" The Good Shepherd giveth His life for His sheep, and calleth His sheep by name. One word was enough ; the Master had come, and called for her, and in a moment she was at His feet, her old post, and has addressed her Lord as of old : "Rabboni, which is to say, Master." Easter has made no change in the relationship ; it has but unified Time and Eternity, given substance to faith and assurance to hope, justified the ways of God to men, and enabled us to say : "I know in whom I have believed." "Then our Lord said to her : Do not touch Me, for I am not yet ascended to my Father. But go to My brethren, and say to them, I ascend to My Father, and to your Father, to My God, and to your God. And Mary Magdalen cometh, and telleth the disciples, I have seen the Lord, and these things He said to me."

*Nobis quoque peccatoribus*—to us, sinners, also, how gladly does the remembrance come that on the first Easter-day, when the sun had risen so that all nature might be bright when the Light of the world, the Orient from on high, achieved His victory, that then sinners found a place, a welcome, and a recognition.

How gladly may we recall to mind that a sinner thus sought and found her Lord, undaunted by difficulties, zealous to do what she could to show her love and make reparation ! How thankfully may we bear in mind that on "the day which the Lord had made," on the day which the Lord alone could make, He at once sought out one who was for all time to be the type of a fall and a conversion, and greeted her as one of the choicest trophies of His Precious Blood. "Jesus said to her : Mary. She, turning, said to Him : Rabboni, which is to say Master." It is enough I know in whom I have believed."

Like St. Mary Magdelen, we are to find our Lord first on Calvary, there to learn "to know Jesus Christ and Him crucified." We learn to pray in the darkness of difficulty, with never a word of reply. We are to "hold fast to that which we have," and seem to lose our Lord, yet ever to be with the Mother of sorrows, who will teach us the meaning of one great word, the word "contradiction," ever the while purchasing and preparing the sweet spices of deeds of reparation, that daily embalm the wounds of our Lord inflicted into His mystical Body the Church. So do we aid by lives of love and trust to effect in God's good time the constant miracle of the Resurrection, the resurrection of the Church, which "dies daily" yet is ever rising again, the resurrection of souls from the death of sin to the life of grace, in which they "live, now not they, but Christ liveth in them."

## CHAPTER LIV

### THE ASCENSION

THERE is a wonderful calm and sense of peace in all the scenes of Easter. That greatest of victories, the victory over death, was gained "without the sound of hammer" or any blast of trumpet. In the early morning, in private, the great stone was rolled away ; two angels only, not the "more than twelve legions" of such, are at hand to break the news to the holy women, and to show them the empty tomb. "Peace be to you" is the simple greeting, when our risen Lord meets His own. His voice is "as the whispering of a gentle wind," and we feel the dignity and ease of the Master hand at every turn. It is the peace of God, the repose after work most perfectly accomplished. At Pentecost our ears shall be opened to "the sound of a mighty wind coming to fill the whole house," and our eyes shall be dazzled by the brightness of "parted tongues, as it were of fire." There will be the stir and excitement of a work beginning, but from Easter Day to Ascension noon all is quiet and peace. Our Lord speaks of the Kingdom of God, and says : "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world ; again I leave the world, and I go to the Father."

The great meeting of our Lord and the Eleven in

Galilee, when He commissioned them to "go into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" is over ; He has promised to be "with them all days, even to the consummation of the world" ; He has "opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures" ; He has told them to return to Jerusalem, and to stay in the city until they be endued "with power from on high." And now on the appointed day, "He led them out as far as Bethania." He had led them to Jerusalem for the Sacred Passion, and "they were astonished, and following were afraid." What did they feel now ? Our Lady was there with the holy women, and all followed our Lord as He led the way. He has chosen His day ; He has chosen His place ; "it is expedient that He should go." So He led them out as far as Bethania, the home of Martha and Mary, where He had been anointed for His burial, where He had raised Lazarus to life. His work is over now, the heavens are opened, and the King of glory may enter into His rest through the gates rolled back. And "lifting up His hands, He blessed them." No words of blessing are recorded, but they may well have been these : "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, whom Thou hast given Me ; that they may be one, as We also are." "And it came to pass whilst He blest them, He was carried up to Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God ; a cloud received Him out of their sight." "He has put on praise and beauty, and is clothed with light as with a garment. He is beautiful above the sons of men, grace is poured abroad in His lips. The clouds are His chariot, and He walks on the wings of the winds. Open to Him the gates of justice ; be ye lifted up, O Eternal Gates, and the King of Glory shall enter in. The crown of tribulation hath

flourished into a crown of glory and a garland of joy. God is ascended with justice, and the Lord with the sound of the trumpet. God sitteth in His holy throne. Blessed art Thou that sitteth upon the cherubim, beholding the depths, and worthy to be praised and glorified for ever."

"And while they were beholding Him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments. Who also said : Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up into heaven ? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into heaven." The holy Angels thus complete their work of ministry to our Lord during His sojourn on earth. They announced His birth, the heralds of glad tidings to the shepherds on Christmas night, and during the years at Nazareth there was without doubt much ministry to our Lord and to His blessed Mother by the Angels. Why indeed should it cease ? The Incarnate Word was at work to compensate for the depleted ranks of the Angelic host, and on that work as it progressed "the Angels desire to look." How often and how lovingly did our Lord bear witness to the ministry to us, declaring that there is joy before the Angels upon one sinner doing penance ! Angels were at hand when the forty days of His Temptation were ended, and when He knelt in agony in the garden of Olives, an Angel from heaven appeared to Him, "comforting Him." In the Sacred Passion, our Lord, "looked for one to comfort Him and found none," for He trod the winepress alone, yet "more than twelve legions of Angels were at His disposal," since "thousands of thousands minister to Him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stand before Him," and what are "twelve legions" among so many ? But not one must come ; the Angels shall

adore the Sacred Passion, and behold its development and note the value of human souls as disclosed thereby, but they shall not minister comfort to Him who is led as a sheep to the slaughter.

But on Easter Day, the time of repression is past ; the sun has risen, and Angels are on guard at the tomb. They are the first to herald the Resurrection, as they were the first to herald the birth of the Saviour. "Fear not," is again their watchword. "Fear not ; for you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. Why seek you the living among the dead ? Go, tell His disciples that He goeth before you into Galilee, there you shall see Him, as He told you."

And so at the Ascension, the holy Angels have their part to play. "If you loved Me," our Lord had said to His disciples, "you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father," and doubtless they were glad when they knelt for the last blessing, and lifted their eyes to see Him ascend through the clouds. The Apostles loved their Lord, but not with the selfish love that would have kept Him still on earth. Their eyes were fixed on heaven, their minds full of the thoughts of the rest into which their Master had entered. But lo ! "two Angels stood by them in white garments," and said somewhat sharply : "Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven ?" Where else could they look at such a time? Why disturb their thoughts, and turn them into another channel ? Yet so they did ; "it is to earth that your thoughts and energy must be directed ; heaven is the end, but you are at the beginning ; no one enters into rest until his work is over ; no one is crowned who has not lawfully striven." "This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, so shall He come as you have seen Him going into heaven."

The Angels, "mighty in strength to execute God's word," remind the Apostles and us of the judgments to come, bidding all be "good stewards of the manifold grace of God," bidding all remember that "pride avarice, luxury, do *not* ascend behind the clouds with our Lord, that no disease ascends with the divine Physician, that the ropes of sin and evil habits prevent our ascent and drag us down. These must be cut and burnt, for only the humble are exalted, only the clean of heart can see God.

"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and I go to the Father"—such is the summary which our Lord bequeathed to us of His sojourn and work on earth. "It is enough for the disciple if he be as his Lord," and "as his Lord" each one must be. Like Him, we make our entrance and our exit; like Him we must labour the thing which is good, and at the last give up the ghost, having "finished the work we were given to do." There must be from all an honest, fervent endeavour to "walk worthy of their vocation, hating that which is evil, clinging to that which is good," being "doers of the word, not hearers only," honouring God, not with the lips, but with the heart, "our meat ever to do the will of Him who sent us, that we may perfect His work." If such be our aim from day to day, we shall lay up treasure for eternity, where no thieves break in and steal; our end will be in peace; we shall have "conversed in fear during the time of our sojourn here," and of us it shall be said: "he pleased God, and was beloved, and, living among sinners, he was translated."

"Now that He ascended, what is it, but because He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" What meaning, what glory and lustre has the Ascension except that humility went before it?

What beauty has that scene on the slopes of Olivet save that in sight there was Mount Calvary, and hard by was Bethlehem? "He emptied Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, therefore, God hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a Name which is above every name."

To "take the form of a servant," is to become as little children, and thus "doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in Him who is the head, even Christ," who bequeathed to us this summary of His life's work, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and I go to the Father."

## CHAPTER LV

### THE GOOD SHEPHERD

"I AM the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. But the hireling and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and flieth ; and the wolf catcheth, and scattereth the sheep ; and the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling and he hath no care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know mine, and mine know me. As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father ; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." (St. John x, 11-16.)

Our Lord has deigned to picture Himself to us by many figures. He is the door by which we enter the fold. He is the light by which we see the way. He is the life by which we live to God. He is the vine, and we are the branches. But, as it would seem, to His own sacred Heart there was no picture more true than the one which describes Him as the Good Shepherd, who giveth even His life for His sheep. It is the only one which the Divine Artist developed at any length, and as we read this great passage which the Church glories to bring before us in the full light

of the Easter victory, we can almost hear our Lord speak it, so true is it—we can almost see Him dwell with love and joy on its several sentences, and we feel that we want no more, for all has been said that can be said.

A thousand years before our Lord came into the world, this close and tender relation between God and the souls of men had been proclaimed, as a theme to cheer and attract the people of God. “The Lord is my shepherd, and I shall want for nothing,” so it ran ; “He hath set me in a place of pasture. He hath brought me up on the water of refreshment, He hath converted my soul. He hath led me in the paths of justice, for His name’s sake. For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I fear no evils, for He is with me ; His rod and staff have comforted me. He has prepared a table before me, against them that afflict me ; He has anointed my head with oil, and my chalice which inebriateth me, how goodly it is ! His mercy follows me all the days of my life.” All this and more is now repeated in our Lord’s words, and the Incarnation has deepened the music of those sweet strains. The Incarnation has emphasised man’s sorrows and need of divine help, even as it has developed the craving of man’s heart for sympathy and his desire of eternal peace ; it has brought God into the maze of human affairs ; and these close relations, this protecting love, and generous provision, are intensified, and are summed up in their new shape and degree in the words : “I am the good shepherd ; the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know mine, and mine know me. Behold I myself will seek my sheep, and will visit them. As the shepherd visiteth his flock in the day when he shall be in the midst of his sheep that are scattered, so will I visit my sheep,

and will deliver them out of all the places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the peoples, and will gather them out of the countries, and will bring them to their own land ; and I will feed them in the mountains of Israel, by the rivers, and in all the habitations of the land. I will feed them in the most fruitful pastures, and their pastures shall be in the high mountains of Israel ; there shall they rest on the green grass, and be fed in fat pastures upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my sheep ; and I cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost ; and that which was driven away, I will bring again ; and I will strengthen that which was broken, and I will strengthen that which was weak, and that which was fat and strong I will preserve ; and I will feed them in judgment.” (Ezechiel xxxiv, 11-16.) “He shall feed His flock like a shepherd. He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and He shall take them up in His bosom, and He Himself shall carry them that are with young.” (Isaias xi, 11.)

“I know Mine, and Mine know Me”—our Lord dwells with special delight on this detail of the picture. Therefore did our Lord teach us by example rather than by word ; therefore did He labour, therefore did He suffer, since the respect, the love, the remembrance, and the obedience of men are only to be won by deeds. His mission was to convince men of the hollowness of the world, of the reality of eternity : to teach them how to live, how to die, how “to keep themselves unspotted from this world.” Many are the ways and fashions around us, but there is one alone that abides, and does not change : it is the life of our Lord, the Good Shepherd, leading us (not driving us, for the shepherd goes in advance of

the flock) into the paths of “holiness and justice all our days.” And He said : “Surely these are My people, children that will not deny ; so He became their Saviour. In all their afflictions He was not troubled, and the Angel of His presence saved them : in His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, and He carried them, and lifted them up. Therefore I will remember the tender mercies of the Lord, the praise of the Lord for all the things that the Lord hath bestowed upon us, and for the multitude of His good things which He hath given them according to the multitude of His mercies.” (Is. lxiii.)

“I know Mine, and Mine know Me,” therefore “they shall want for nothing.” My fountains shall never cease to flow, and waters shall be drawn from them with joy ; there is an abundance of daily bread, and My gifts are suited to their needs. On the road they stumble and fall ; My help shall contain both a gentle rebuke and a fulness of sympathy. On the road they lose heart and lag behind, they grow deaf to My voice, and turn their eyes to other paths, and guides ; My help gives them courage, reminds them of what they know, bids them try afresh, if only to advance but a few steps in the road that leads to life. “I am the Good Shepherd, and I know Mine, and Mine know Me,” therefore I know what I can expect from each. The burden for each is measured with love and wisdom, for My sheep are not all equally strong, and no two of them bear the same name. Each has his own place in My heart, and to each I assign what is most suited to each.

“I am the Good Shepherd, and I know Mine, and Mine know Me,” therefore My judgment is one of mercy. “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” is ever My plea on their behalf, and “no one shall snatch them out of My hand.” “Thine

they were, O Father, and to Me Thou gavest them ; I pray for them because they are Thine. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, whom Thou hast given Me ; and, Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me ; that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world."

"I am the Good Shepherd, and I know Mine, and Mine know Me." The sheep of the flock ever seek to know their Lord and Shepherd more and more. "This is eternal life," said our Lord, on the night in which He was betrayed, "that they may know Thee the only living and true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent." By prayer and meditation, by the use of the Sacraments and all means of grace, to grasp the vastness and beauty of the Incarnation, more and more ; to see in it God's sense of man's value, the reality of life's purpose, the responsibility of man, the gravity of sin ; to read into that step of divine condescension the revelation vouchsafed of the Fatherhood of God, the value of the gift of creation, the truth of Divine Providence, the renewal of the face of the earth, the hopes vouchsafed to men, the helps and consolations ever within their reach, the brotherhood of men and all that it implies—this is their glory and their crown.

"I am the Good Shepherd, and I know Mine, and Mine know Me." "My ways are not as their ways : My thoughts are not as their thoughts. My Cross is the sign by which men conquer. My friends look on One despised and rejected, on One whom they have pierced, as the source of hope and strength. I ever make as though I would go farther," but "I am the Good Shepherd, who laid down My life for My sheep, and I know Mine, and Mine know Me." "Greater

love than this no man hath that he lay down his life for his friend." And each one is his brother's keeper. each one is a shepherd, who must have a care for the sheep, and an interest in "other sheep that are not of this fold." By prayer, by example, by charity, let us aid them, and draw them "to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls." "The charity of Christ presseth us to learn of Him who is meek and humble of heart, and "who came not to destroy souls, but to save." By the merits of the Sacred Passion, "we are come to Mount Sion, and to the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of Angels, and to the Church of the first-born who are written in the Heavens, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament." (Heb. xii, 22-24.)

## APPENDIX I

### THE SCRIPTURE OF THE SACRED PASSION

"BEHOLD I come. In the head of the book it is written of me that I should do thy will : O my God, I have desired it, and Thy law is in the midst of my heart. I have declared thy justice in a great church, lo, I will not restrain my lips : O Lord, thou knowest it." (Ps. xxxix, 8-10.)

"He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name." (St. John i, 10-12.)

"Let us therefore lie in wait for the Just, because He is not to our turn, and He is contrary to our doings, and upbraideth us with transgressions of the law, and divulgeth against us the sins of our way of life. He boasteth that He hath the knowledge of God, and calleth Himself the Son of God. He is become a censurer of our thoughts. He is grievous unto us, even to behold : for His life is not like other men's and His ways are very different. We are esteemed by Him as triflers, and He abstaineth from our ways as from filthiness, and He preferreth the latter end of the just, and glorieth that

He hath God for His Father. Let us see then if His words be true, and let us prove what shall happen to Him, and we shall know what His end shall be. For if He be the true Son of God, He will defend Him, and will deliver Him from the hands of his enemies. Let us examine Him by outrages and tortures, that we may know His meekness and try His patience. Let us condemn Him to a most shameful death ; for there shall be respect had unto Him by His words. These things they thought, and were deceived, for their own malice blinded them.” (Wisdom ii, 12-21.)

“He shall grow up as a tender plant before Him, and as a root out of a thirsty ground ; there is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness ; and we have seen Him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of Him ; despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity; and His look was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows ; and we have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins ; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, every one hath turned aside into his own way : and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was offered because it was His own will, and He opened not His mouth : He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before His shearer, and He shall not open His mouth. He was taken away from distress, and from judgment : who shall declare His generation ? because He is cut off out of the land of the living : for the wickedness of My people have I struck Him. And He shall give the ungodly for His burial, and the rich

for His death : because He hath done no iniquity, neither was there deceit in His mouth. And the Lord was pleased to bruise Him in infirmity : if He shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long-lived seed, and will of the Lord shall be prosperous in His hand." (Isaias liii, 2-10.)

"Save me, O God : for the waters are come in even unto my soul. I stick fast in the mire of the deep : and there is no sure standing. I am come into the depth of the sea : and a tempest hath overwhelmed me. I have laboured with crying : my jaws are become hoarse : my eyes have failed, whilst I hope in my God. They are multiplied above the hairs of My head, who hate Me without cause. Because for Thy sake I have borne reproach ; shame hath covered My face. I am become a stranger to My brethren, and an alien to the sons of My mother. For the zeal of Thy house hath eaten Me up : and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon Me. And I covered My soul in fasting ; and it was made a reproach to Me. And I made haircloth My garment, and I became a byword to them. They that sat in the gate spoke against Me : and they that drank wine made Me their song. But as for Me, My prayer is to Thee, O Lord ; for the time of Thy good pleasure, O God. In the multitude of Thy mercy hear Me, in the truth of Thy salvation. Draw Me out of the mire, that I may not stick fast ; deliver Me from them that hate Me, and out of the deep waters. Let not the tempest of water drown Me, not the deep swallow Me up : and let not the pit shut her mouth upon Me. Hear Me, O Lord, for Thy mercy is kind ; look upon me according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies. And turn not away Thy face from Thy servant ; for I am in trouble hear Me speedily. Attend to My soul and deliver it ;

save Me because of My enemies. Thou knowest My reproach, and my confusion, and my shame. In Thy sight are all they that afflict Me ; My heart hath expected reproach and misery. And I looked for one that would grieve together with Me, but there was none. And they gave Me gall for My food, and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." (Ps. lxviii, 1-5 ; 8-22.)

"Amen, amen I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground, dieth, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (St. John, xii, 24, 25.)

"I have a baptism, wherewith I am to be baptised, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." (St. Luke, xii, 50.)

"Looking on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who having joy set before Him, endureth the cross, despising the shame, and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God. For think diligently upon Him that endureth such opposition from sinners, against Himself : that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds." (Heb. xii, 2, 3.)

"He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names : that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father." (Phil. ii, 8-11.)

"In whom we have redemption through His Blood, the remission of sins." (Col. i, 14.)

"Know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver, from your vain conversation of the tradition of your fathers : but with

the Precious Blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled." (1 Peter i, 1, 18, 19.)

"Christ therefore having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought ; for He that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sins : that now He may live the rest of His time in the flesh, not after the desires of men, but according to the will of God." (1 Peter iv, 1, 2.)

"In Him it hath well pleased the Father, that all fullness should dwell, and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, making peace through the Blood of His cross, both as to the things on earth, and the things that are in heaven." (Col. i, 19, 20.)

"Blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross : and despoiling the principalities and powers, He hath exposed them confidently in open show, triumphing over them in Himself." (Col. ii, 14, 15.)

"I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me. I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself for me." (Gal. ii, 20.)

## APPENDIX II

### A SHORT STUDY OF THE SACRED PASSION IN THE GOSPELS

THERE is a great difference between the four Gospels, for each has its own distinctive style and spirit, each was written with a special object, each has its own leading ideas, each was written for a definite class of readers. Hence we find great variety in the choice of material ; an event fully recorded in one Gospel is passed over in silence in another, or an event recorded at great length in one is summed up in a verse or two in another. There is, for example, but one miracle among the many worked by our Lord which is recorded by all four of the Evangelists, namely, the feeding of the five thousand with five loaves in the desert.

Our Lord's life was many sided. It was, first of all, the historical consummation of God's purpose in Israel, the fulfilment of all types and prophecy, the closing of the Past, the opening of the Future, with our Lord as the connecting link between the two. This is pre-eminently St. Matthew's picture of our Lord, and his narrative, which may fitly be called the Gospel of the Discourses, abounds in quotations from the Old Testament to illustrate his theme. Again, the life of our Lord, was one of unbroken toil

of benevolence, of going about doing good, and all made strong with the strength of God. It is the story of the "strong Son of God" at work, restoring all things, expelling the devil, and bestowing peace. This is St. Mark's special portraiture of our Lord, and his Gospel may fitly be termed the Gospel of Miracles.

Coming to St. Luke's graphic narrative, we find our Lord's life to have been essentially the life of the Saviour and Physician of men, His days full of healing, of sympathy, of pardon for the sinner, of tenderness for the fallen, of comfort for the poor and suffering ; the wings of Angels hover over it, the music of sweet canticles are its accompaniment, while it is fragrant throughout with the incense of prayer. It portrays to us our Lord as the Good Samaritan, and bequeaths to the world the Gospel of Mercy for all time in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

Lastly, in passing to St. John's great and supplementary narrative, we find ourselves with our Lord as a King, full of majesty divine, clothed with royalty, bestowing gifts, the Lord mighty in battle, a witness to the truth. "St. John seems to throw open the very gates of heaven, and to set before our eyes the wondrous nature of the Son of God in its overpowering splendour. Hence from the earliest times his Gospel has been called the spiritual Gospel." That we possess this fourfold and highly-varied record of the life of our Lord, should be to us a subject of gratitude, and certainly not a source of surprise ; but what may certainly surprise us is that in the accounts of the Sacred Passion the same variety, the same difference of purpose, the same marked features, the same varied choice of incidents, are so clearly to be found. Let us consider this point a little.

The Passion of our Lord occupied one full day of His life on earth, and no more. It is not therefore the history of months or of years that we are to study, but only the history of one full day. Our Blessed Lady and all the Apostles were in Jerusalem that day ; they knew what was taking place, and every detail was to them a thing of beauty and of value. Now supposing we had been in Jerusalem on that day, and had seen and heard all that happened ; and supposing we sat down to write an account of such a day to a friend, what would we say to ourselves ? We would say : "I will tell him *everything*, all I can remember, and *as fully as possible*, for every detail, even the smallest, is so precious, and, will be of such interest." That is certainly what we should do in such a case, but the Evangelists did not act thus. As Fr. Coleridge (*Life of our Lord*, Vol. 2, p. 348) says : "There is no part of the history of our Lord in which the Evangelists are more independent, no part in which we may study with greater profit and more fruitful attention the manner in which each supplies something, and indeed many things of great importance, which the others have passed over."

For example, St. John makes no mention whatever of the Agony in the Garden ; St. Luke makes no mention of the Scourging at the pillar, or of the Crowning with thorns. Again, to take the seven words spoken by our Lord on the Cross, as our illustration—St. Matthew and St. Mark record only one out of the seven ; St. Luke gives but three, while three more are supplied by St. John.

There are nine events in the history of the Sacred Passion which are recorded in all four Gospels and they are as follows : St. Peter drawing his sword in the Garden of Olives to strike the servant of the

high-priest ; the denials of St. Peter ; the preferment of Barabbas to our Lord : the crucifixion of the two thieves : the division of our Lord's garments by the soldiers ; Joseph of Arimathea begging from Pilate the body of our Lord ; Joseph of Arimathea bringing fine linen in which to wrap the Body of our Lord ; the Crucifixion of our Lord, and the taking of our Lord down from the Cross.

What do we notice about these ? That there is only one event out of the nine, namely the crucifixion, which has direct reference to our Lord Himself ; all the rest have reference to the Apostles, or to the soldiers, or to the crowd, or to the friends of our Lord. This is most striking, and worthy of attention ; and it seems to embody a great lesson. It is as though our Lord, in His humility and love of being unknown, had said to the sacred writers : "Tell my friends and disciples that I loved them to the end, and was crucified for them ; but as to the rest, I leave it to you to say all or none, as you please."

Coming now to the sacred narratives in greater detail, we are indebted to St. Matthew alone for the full history of Judas. He alone mentions the thirty pieces of silver, the remorse and suicide of Judas, and the purchase of the potter's field with the illgotten coins to be a burying place for strangers. He also alone mentions the dream of Pilate's wife, the fact that after the crucifixion the Jews went to Pilate about the sealing and guarding of our Lord's tomb. St. Mark's account of the sacred Passion closely resembles that of St. Matthew, and is far more full in its narrative of the earlier scenes, such as the Agony in the garden, than of the later ones. Indeed his narrative of the trials of our Lord and of the later scenes is distinctly meagre. St. Mark alone makes mention of the young man (who was very likely him-

self) being seized in the Garden of Olives, and while he narrates, as we should expect, the denial of St. Peter more pointedly than any other writer, he alone records the fact that the cock crew twice in fulfilment of our Lord's prediction.

Passing on to St. Luke's narrative, we find that he alone tells us that at His Agony our Lord sweated blood, and was comforted by an Angel from heaven ; he alone records that at the Agony the disciples slept "for sorrow," that our Lord healed the wounded ear of the servant of the high-priest, and cast a look of gentle reproof and forgiveness on St. Peter after his triple denial. St. Luke alone records the trial of our Lord before Herod ; he alone tells us of the lament of the holy women over our Lord on the way to Calvary, and our Lord's tender words to them in reply. But it is in the three words of our Lord spoken from the Cross, which St. Luke alone records, that the chief feature of his whole Gospel stands out so strongly : "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." There is the beauty of forgiving tenderness, the beauty of pardoning power, the beauty of perfect peace.

In the incidents of the Sacred Passion which we owe to St. John alone, we are struck by that "Kingly" bearing of calm and self-possession which is so prominent in the pages of his Gospel. We see this, for instance, in the scene between our Lord and the soldiers after His arrest in the Garden of Olives. It is St. John who gives us by far the fullest record of the various interviews between our Lord and Pilate, even as he alone records the fact that our Lord was tried first by Annas, where He was cruelly struck on the face, and gave so kingly a reply to the insolent

question addressed to Him. The great closing scene of the "Ecce Homo" we owe to St. John alone, and when we come to the place which is called Calvary, St. John, who alone has told so tenderly that our Lord went forth to it "bearing His own Cross," puts on record the three kingly words of our Lord : "Woman, behold thy son ; son, behold thy Mother" "I thirst," and at the last hour "It is consummated."

We may close this short study of the Sacred Passion, by comparing the accounts in the four Gospels of the actual death of our Lord. In St. Matthew it is with a cry and a loud voice, as though heralding in the dawn of the day of the Lord in the fullness of time. In St. Mark it is also with a cry and a loud voice, as though the Master were working for His own to the end, doing good to the last. In St. Luke it is with the word : "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," a death filled with prayer and peace. In St. John it is the death of a king, who lays aside his crown. He died when, and where, and as He willed it ; it is the death of One who "has power to lay down His life, and power also to take it up again." "And bowing His head," so we read, "He gave up the ghost."

The reader will find a scheme of the narrative of the Sacred Passion in the Four Gospels set forth in the following Table.



### APPENDIX III

#### THE PASSION OF THE LORD IN THE FOUR GOSPELS

ST. MATTHEW.	ST. MARK.	ST. LUKE.	ST. JOHN.
Agony in the Garden.	Agony in the Garden.	Agony in the Garden with (a) appearance of the angel (b) sweat of blood.	
St. Peter drawing his sword.	St. Peter drawing his sword.	St. Peter drawing his sword, with healing of the ear of the servant.	St. Peter drawing his sword, with the name of the servant.
			Scene between our Lord and the soldiers. "Whom seek ye."
Flight of the Apostles.	Flight of the Apostles.		
	Seizure of the young man in the Garden.		
			Trial before Annas.
Denial of St. Peter (fully).	Denial of St. Peter (fully) with mention of both cock-crowings.	Denial of St. Peter (fully) with mention of our Lord's look on St. Peter.	Denial of St. Peter (fully) with explanation of how he got into the court, and no mention of his sorrow.
Trial of our Lord before Caiaphas.	Trial of our Lord before Caiaphas.		
Mockery and ill-treatment of our Lord.	Mockery and ill-treatment of our Lord.	Mockery and ill-treatment of our Lord.	
Judas : (a) the 30 pieces (b) his confession (c) his death (d) the purchase of the potter's field.			

PASSION OF OUR LORD—*Continued.*

ST. MATTHEW.	ST. MARK.	ST. LUKE.	ST. JOHN.
Crying with a loud voice, He gave up the ghost.	Crying with a loud voice, He gave up the ghost.	Crying with a loud voice, He gave up the ghost.	Bowing His head He gave up the ghost.
Veil of the Temple rent in two. Also earthquake and opening of graves.	Veil of the Temple rent in two.	Veil of the Temple rent in two.	
			Breaking legs of the two thieves.
			Opening our Lord's side with a spear.
Joseph of Arimathaea begs from Pilate the Body of our Lord.	Joseph of Arimathaea begs from Pilate the Body of our Lord.	Joseph of Arimathaea begs from Pilate the Body of our Lord.	Joseph of Arimathaea begs from Pilate the Body of our Lord.
			Nicodemus brings 100 lbs. weight of aloes.
Joseph of Arimathaea brings fine linen.	Joseph of Arimathaea brings fine linen.	Joseph of Arimathaea brings fine linen.	Joseph of Arimathaea brings fine linen.
Taking down from the Cross.	Taking down from the Cross.	Taking down from the Cross.	Taking down from the Cross.
Sealing and guarding the Tomb of our Lord.			









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